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editor's letter

For many of us May is synonymous with the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. As always, we find some of the world's best designers at work there, so it's a tough job deciding which ones to feature; we hope our selection includes some of the very best. I've no doubt that all of the designers will have spent months, if not years, preparing for the show, aiming to showcase their skills and win the highest medal possible. Each year the awards are hotly debated, but what exactly makes a medal-winning garden and how do you win the much coveted Best Show Garden? Design critic Annie Gatti goes behind the scenes and explains the judging process in detail on page 52. Having built a reputation for her beautiful floral exhibits in the Great Pavilion, organic herb grower Jekka McVicar is this year designing her first show garden. Sponsored by St John's Hospice, the garden, entitled a Modern Apothecary, will showcase plants that are of benefit to our health and wellbeing. Many of these will also be useful in the kitchen, and for this issue, Jekka writes about 12 of the best culinary herbs and how to use them. In the third of our four-part series on Allt-y-bela, designer Arne Maynard's garden in Wales, we look at how he creates summer interest and the meadow and rose plantings in particular. We also discover nine of the best pale and interesting plants for a White Garden; plant expert Andy McIndoe (responsible for Hillier's 25 gold-medal-winning exhibits at Chelsea) looks at his favourite cornus; and for those interested in growing plants in containers, we offer three very stylish ideas. I hope you enjoy the issue.

Juliet

GARDENS
Chelsea Flower Show
Essential herbs for keen cooks

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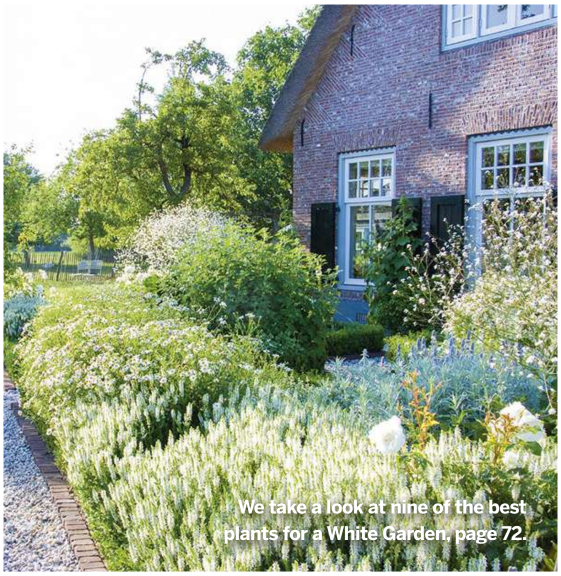

We take a look at nine of the best plants for a White Garden, page 72.

Organic grower Jekka McVicar discusses 12 of the best herbs for keen cooks, page 86.

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MAAYKE DE RIDDER, ANDREW MONTGOMERY

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COVER IMAGE
Jekka McVicar's herb garden. Photograph by **Jason Ingram**

Chelsea Flower Show

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CLAIRE TAKACS, ANDREW MONTGOMERY

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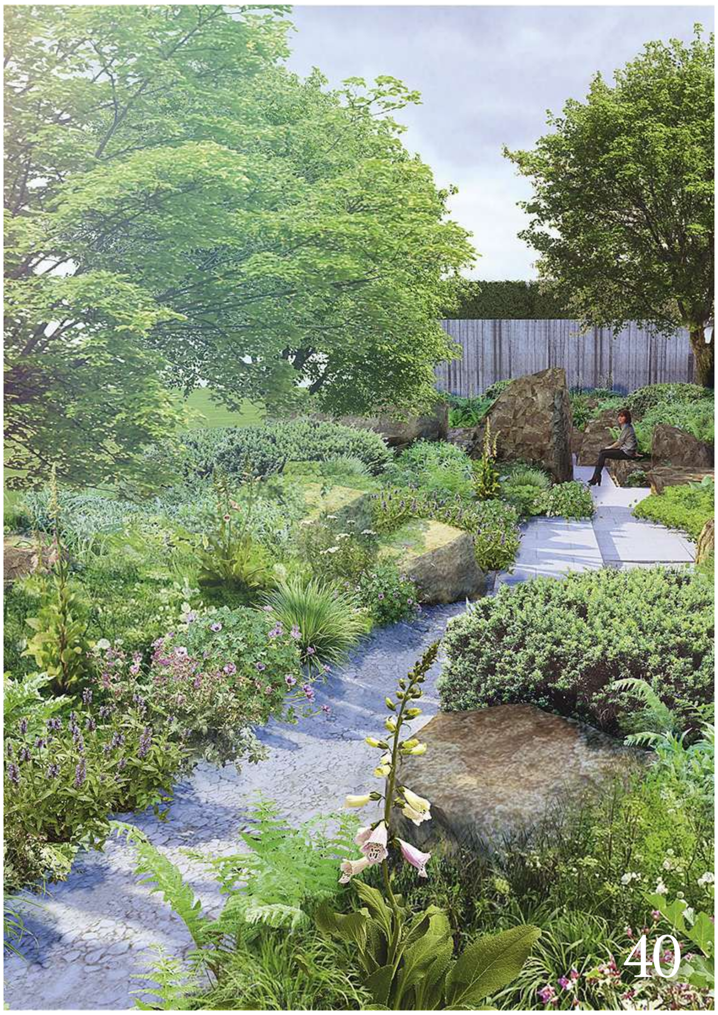

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- Join our June Reader Days at **Great Dixter** and **Highgrove** – page 10
- Save money when you **subscribe to the digital edition** – see page 36
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contributors

JULIAN WINSLOW

ANDY McINDOE

Andy is a practical horticulturist and author who designs and advises on gardens of all sizes and has been responsible for 25 gold-medal winning exhibits at the Chelsea Flower Show. He has a special interest in trees and shrubs, and recommends flowering dogwoods on page 78.

"Cornus are among my favourite garden plants for flowers and foliage and always feature in my gardens, books and lectures."

TIGIST TSEGIE

LISE FUNDERBURG

US-based Lise writes about gardening for publications, such as *Architectural Digest* and *Garden Design* magazine, when she's not being distracted by her large garden in Philadelphia. This month, on page 92, she visits Stone Arches, a woodland garden in upstate New York.

"The pleasure that Mark Veeder gets from every last leaf in his garden is completely contagious... and utterly inspiring."

ANNIE GATTI

Annie is a freelance garden writer with a special interest in design. She's looking forward to making a new garden soon, but in the meantime is happily stockpiling ideas from the gardens she visits. This month she's compiled our Chelsea coverage, starting on page 39.

"It's exciting to see several Chelsea designers this year creating re-imagined landscapes, without a chair or garden building in sight."

JEKKA McVICAR

Jekka is an award-winning herb grower, who is also an RHS ambassador promoting health and happiness through gardening. She is passionate about including herbs both in the garden and kitchen, and this month she shares some of her favourites on page 86.

"Andrew Montgomery's photographs beautifully illustrate how herbs can transform a simple meal into a feast."

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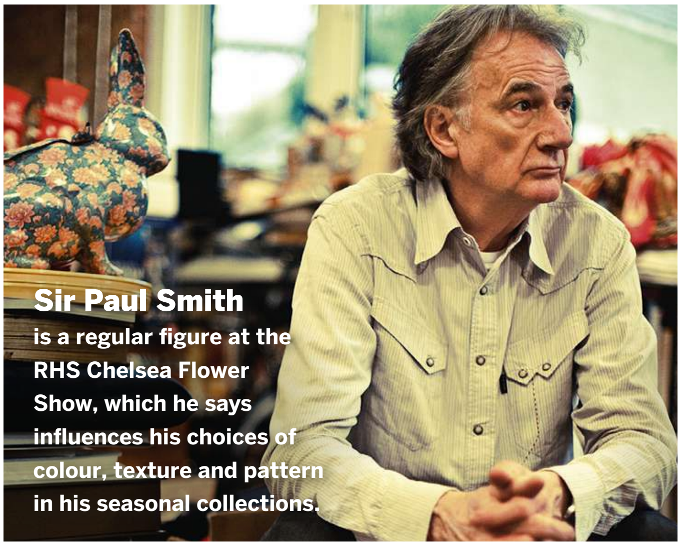
***Gardens Illustrated* Talk**
24 May 2016 – below

Great Dixter Celebration
20 June 2016 – page 10

Highgrove Garden Tour
24 June 2016 – page 11



Sir Paul Smith is a regular figure at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show, which he says influences his choices of colour, texture and pattern in his seasonal collections.

Luciano Giubbilei Italian-born Luciano came to England in 1994 to study garden design. His international practice designs gardens characterised by the beauty of their spatial arrangement.

Tuesday 24 May 2016

Gardens Illustrated Talk

Join us at the Royal Geographical Society in London for an inspirational discussion between fashion designer Sir Paul Smith and garden designer Luciano Giubbilei

When Luciano Giubbilei first met world-renowned fashion designer Sir Paul Smith at the Chelsea Flower Show in 2011, it was a meeting that was to set Luciano on a new path in his design career. For our talk Luciano and Sir Paul will look back at the effects of that meeting and explore what for them are key relationships between fashion, plants, flowers and design.

Book now for Standard and Premium tickets. All tickets are allocated seating with Premium ticket holders seated in the front section of the lecture theatre. Premium guests also receive a glass of Laurent-Perrier champagne on arrival as well as a *Gardens Illustrated* goody bag.

Talk details

- **Date** Tuesday 24 May 2016.
- **Venue** Royal Geographical Society, 1 Kensington Gore, London SW7 2AR.

PROGRAMME

- **6pm** Doors open – cash bar available. Premium ticket holders will be served a glass of Laurent-Perrier champagne.
- **7-8.15pm** Talk including Q&A.
- **9pm** Doors close.

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Gardens Illustrated reserves the right to replace either of the speakers with other speakers of equal stature in the unlikely event that either of them is unable to attend. Tickets must be booked in advance. Please let us know when booking of any special access requirements. Tickets are non-refundable. Driving to the lecture is not advised. Nearest London Underground station is South Kensington.

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JAMES MOONEY, ANDREW MONTGOMERY

TESSA TRAEGER

Monday 20 June 2016

Celebrating Great Dixter

Join head gardener Fergus Garrett and garden writer Anna Pavord at Great Dixter to celebrate Christopher Lloyd's legacy and reflect on the garden's ongoing evolution

Great Dixter was the home of the late, great gardener and gardening writer Christopher Lloyd who spent more than 50 years creating, refining and experimenting in the garden – and referencing much of his work in his writing. Now under the stewardship of the Great Dixter Charitable Trust, and with Fergus Garrett as head gardener, Dixter continues as one of the world's most notable gardens. To mark the ten years since Christo's death, Fergus is joined by garden writer Anna Pavord. Her friendship with Christo spanned decades and the two corresponded and shared gardening opinions on both a personal and professional level.

For our reader event, you are welcome to spend the day at Great Dixter, immersing yourself in the gardens at your leisure in the morning, and then gathering in the afternoon for a talk with Fergus and Anna, who will celebrate Christo's legacy and consider what Great Dixter achieves today in terms of gardening education and excellence.

And since it's midsummer, we'll be celebrating the season too, ending the day with tea, scones, strawberries and champagne served in the garden.

Great Dixter's head gardener **Fergus Garrett** is an expert plantsman who gardened alongside Christopher Lloyd until his death in 2006. Fergus continues to garden in the spirit of innovation for which Christo was renowned and ensures that Great Dixter remains one of the world's finest gardens.

Anna Pavord is a renowned garden writer and author of numerous gardening books, including the widely praised *The Tulip*. Her friendship with Christo developed over many years and she talks of 'a dynamism about Great Dixter you don't find anywhere else'.

Event details

- **Date** Monday 20 June 2016.
- **Venue** Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye, East Sussex TN31 6PH.

PROGRAMME

- **10.30am-2pm** Guests invited to enjoy the gardens at their leisure
- **2-4.20pm** Talk from Fergus Garrett and Anna Pavord in the Great Hall (with a break at 3pm for refreshments)
- **4.30pm** Tea, scones, strawberries and a glass of Champagne Taittinger

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- Ticket £100, must be booked in advance.

Tickets and directions will be sent out prior to the event. Places are limited so booking is essential. Please advise us when booking of any dietary requirements or accessibility queries. For more details about the day itself call Great Dixter on 01797 254048 or go to greatdixter.co.uk. Great Dixter, Northiam, Rye East Sussex TN31 6PH.

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Friday 24 June 2016

Garden tour at Highgrove

We are delighted to offer readers of *Gardens Illustrated* the chance to attend a special tour of the glorious gardens at Highgrove, the private home of TRH The Prince of Wales and The Duchess of Cornwall

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Event details

- **Date** Friday 24 June 2016.
- **Venue** Highgrove Garden, Tetbury, Gloucestershire.

PROGRAMME

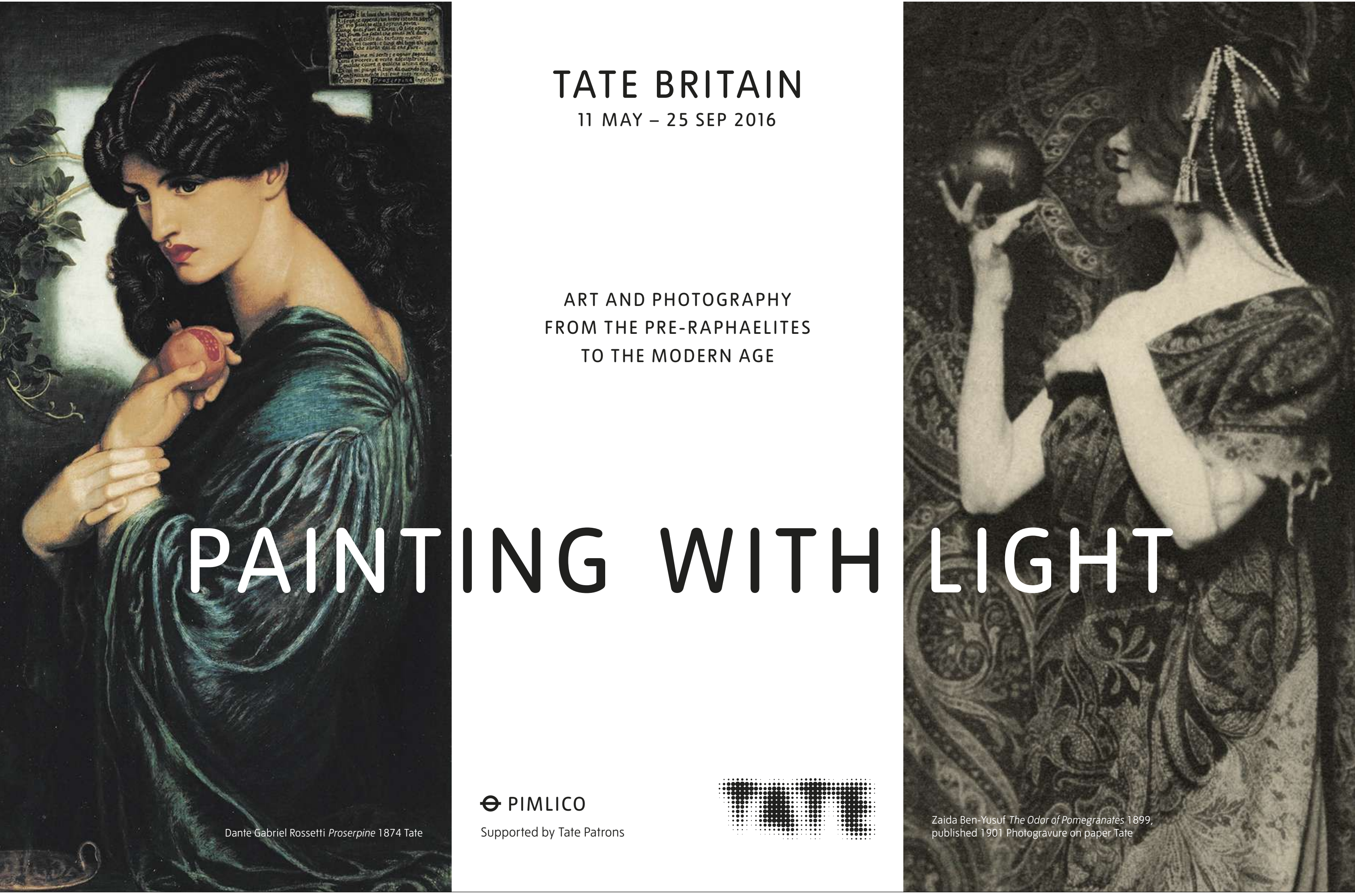
- **5pm** Arrival, refreshments on the terrace.
- **5.30pm** Tour of the garden.
- **7.30pm** Highgrove Champagne and canapés served, plus the opportunity to browse the Highgrove Estate Shop.
- **9pm** Approximate finish.

TICKETS

- Tickets cost £95 per person. Places are limited so we recommend booking early to avoid disappointment.

All profits from Highgrove Garden Tours, products and events are donated to HRH The Prince of Wales's Charitable Foundation.

Tickets are non-refundable and cannot be exchanged. We reserve the right to change any element of an event due to circumstances beyond its reasonable control. By attending the event you agree to be photographed and waive all rights, including moral rights, in any photography. Full details will be sent with a confirmation letter.



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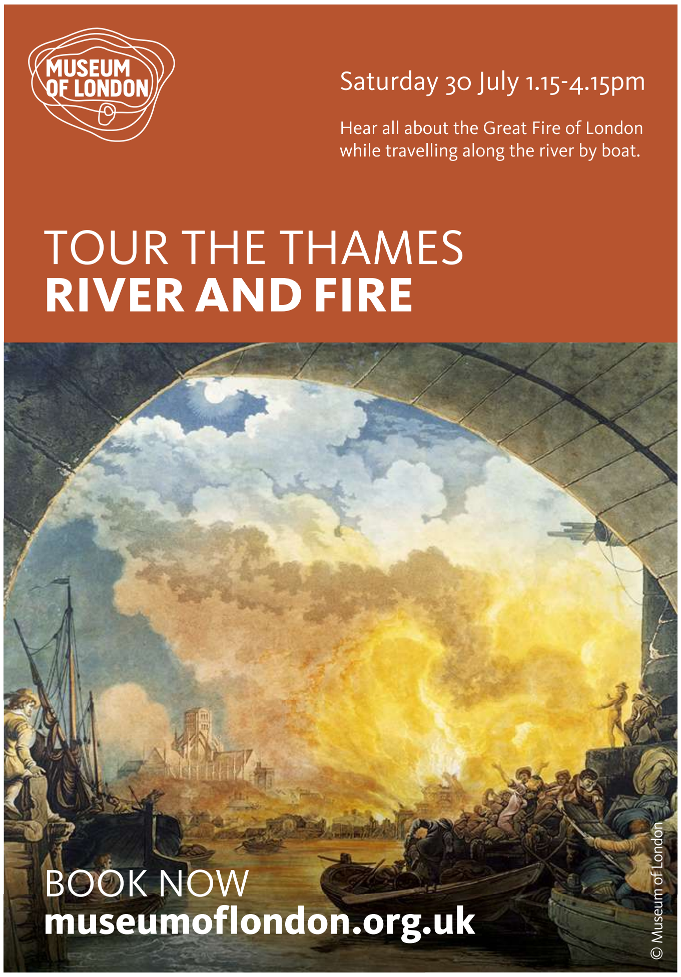

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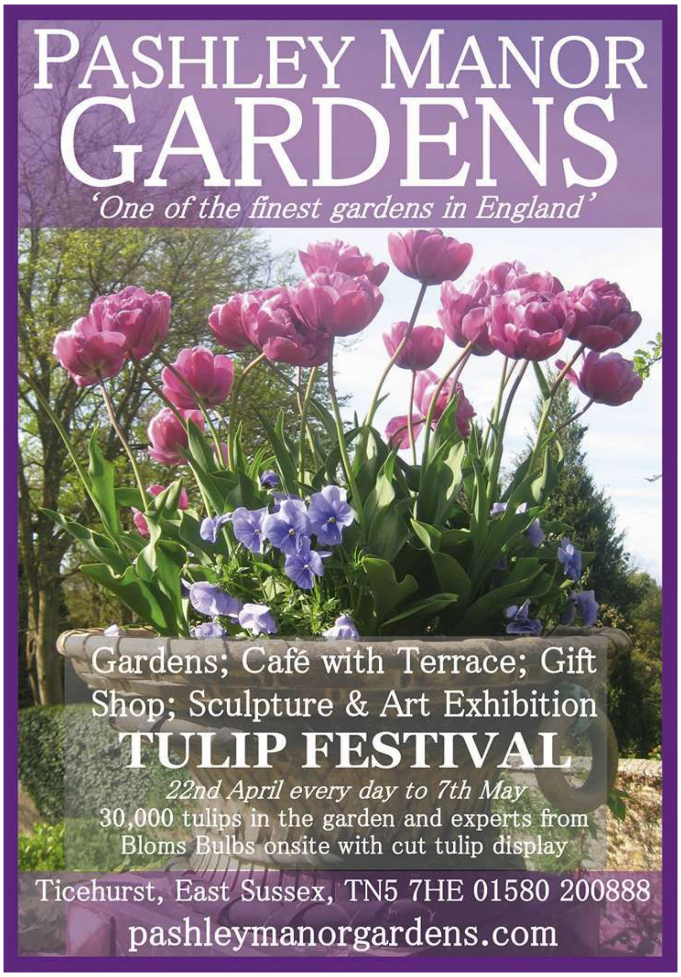

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Friday 10th June, 11am – 12.30pm, £20

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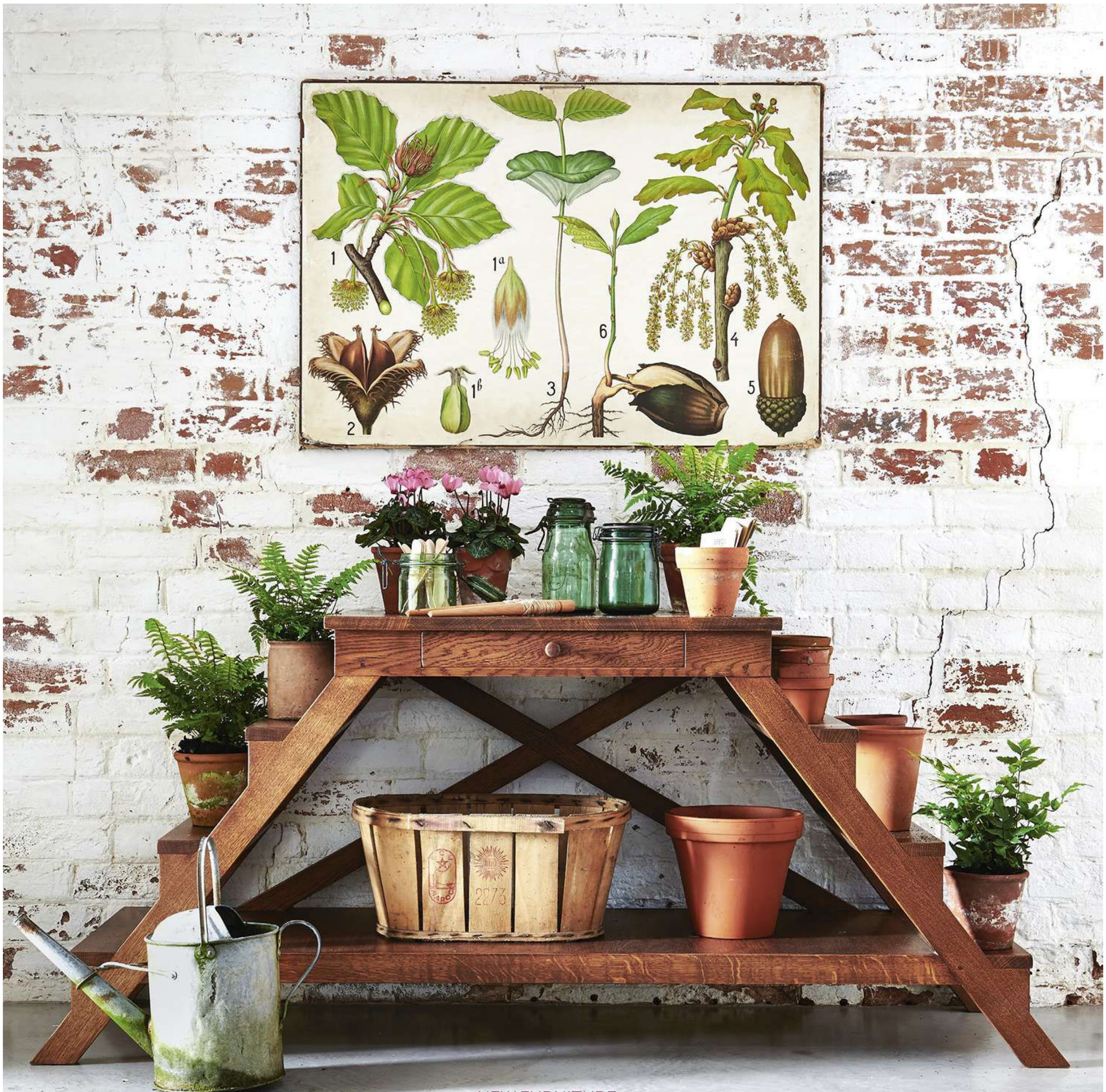
What's happening, where to go, what's in flower and what to buy this month

NEWS COMPILED BY **ALYS HURN**



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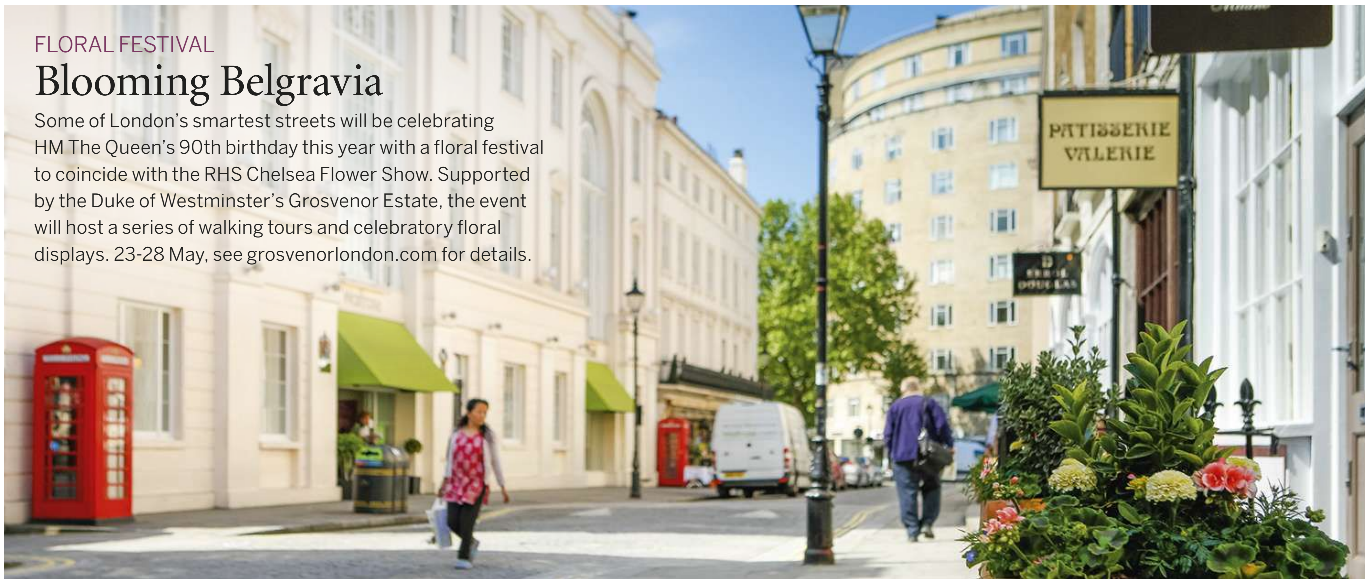


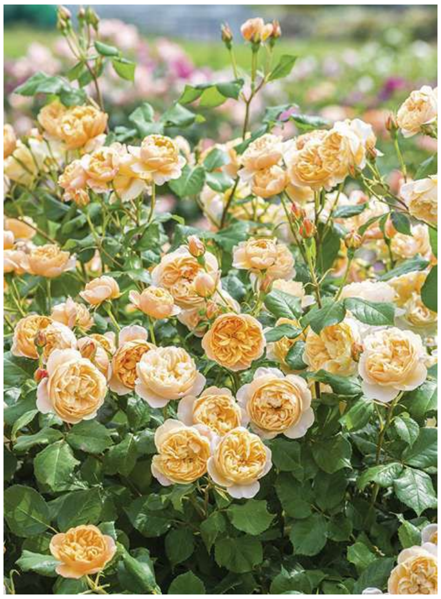
FLORAL FESTIVAL

Blooming Belgravia

Some of London's smartest streets will be celebrating HM The Queen's 90th birthday this year with a floral festival to coincide with the RHS Chelsea Flower Show. Supported by the Duke of Westminster's Grosvenor Estate, the event will host a series of walking tours and celebratory floral displays. 23-28 May, see grosvenorlondon.com for details.

COLOURFUL STORY

At this year's Chelsea Flower Show look out for David Austin Roses' new Rosa Roald Dahl *(='Ausowlish'), launched to mark the centenary of the author's birth. Peach-coloured (in honour of Dahl's* James And The Giant Peach*), the hybrid musk rose grows to 1.2m and has a medium, tea fragrance. Prices start at £19.95 for a bare root plant, with a percentage of sales going to charity.* ***Tel 01902 376300, davidaustinroses.com***



FERN IMAGE BY MICHAEL HAYWARD

LIMITED EDITION

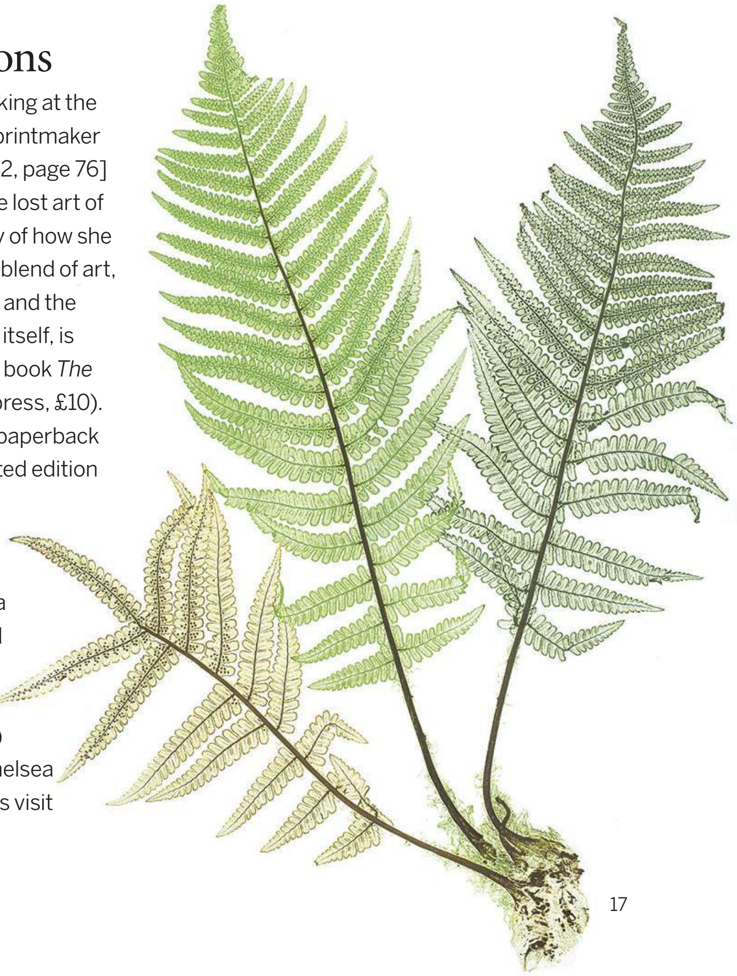
First impressions

Five years ago, while working at the Chelsea Physic Garden, printmaker Pia Östlund [see issue 222, page 76] became fascinated by the lost art of nature printing. The story of how she rediscovered this unique blend of art, science and engineering, and the history of nature printing itself, is told in Simon Prett's new book *The Nature-Printer* (The Timpress, £10). The book is published in paperback on 1 May alongside a limited edition of 75, part leather-bound books that will include a signed copy of Pia's first successful nature-print, a herbarium specimen and 32 pages of colour plates. Priced at £195 (£150 before publication) all profits will go to the Chelsea Physic Garden. For details visit **thetimpress.com**

BEE COUNT

Bit of a buzz

Help give bee populations a boost by joining in this year's Great British Bee Count from 19 May to 30 June. The count, which has been organised by Friends of the Earth, and sponsored by Waitrose, will help to build a picture of how these crucial pollinators are faring. To get involved, simply download the free, easy-to-use app and record the number of bees in your garden. **greatbritishbeecount.co.uk**



CONSERVATION

Rhododendrons return

The National Trust for Scotland is offering residents of selected villages in the Scottish Highlands non-invasive rhododendron cultivars, such as 'Lord Roberts' and 'Cunningham's White', in exchange for any *R. ponticum* (above) growing in their gardens. The innovative scheme came about after the NTS, which had been trying to eradicate the shrub from its Torridon estate, discovered the plant had spread to nearby gardens and was creeping back.

LOOK SHARP
Make light work of trimming jobs with this new Hand Trimming Shear from Darlac. Its spring action, soft-grip handles and smooth cutting action make it perfect for shaping topiary. Costs just £9.99. See ***darlac.com*** *or call 01753 547790 for stockists.*

GROW YOUR OWN

It's not rocket science

If you're keen to start growing your own veg but don't have the time to sow from scratch, then a simple solution from Rocket Gardens could be the answer. The company supplies convenient, carefully selected boxes of organic, baby plug plants, with prices ranging from £21.99 for a Taster Salad Garden to £299 for a full allotment, or you can pick and mix your own box from a wide selection of vegetables, fruits and herbs. **rocketgardens.co.uk**

Diary

Suffolk Plant Heritage Spring Plant Fair.

- **Bluebell Walks at Rode Hall**

Enjoy the carpet of ancient bluebells on a stroll through the Old Wood at Rode Hall. 30 April – 8 May, 11am-5pm. £5. Rode Hall, Scholar Green, Cheshire ST7 3QP. Tel 01270 873237, rodehall.co.uk

- **The Working Garden**

Benjamin William Pope, head gardener at a private Sussex garden, offers advice and shares his knowledge of The Working Garden in a lecture. 6 May, 7pm. £12.50. Allomorphic, 11 Lansdown, Stroud, Glouscestershire GL5 1BB. allomorphic.co.uk

- **Garden Photography Masterclass**

Learn techniques to help you to improve your garden photography with garden photographer Clive Nichols in the grounds of Pettifers Garden. 10 May, 10am-4pm. £100, includes lunch. Pettifers, Lower Wardington, Banbury OX17 1RU. Tel 01295 71288, clivenichols.com

- **Little Ouesburn Open Gardens**

The residents of Little Ouesburn are opening their gardens to the public to raise funds for the village church and the village hall. 15 May, 10am-5pm. £5, garden only. Little Ouseburn, North Yorkshire. Tel 01923 339622.

- **Petersham Open Gardens**

Residents of Petersham Village near Richmond Park will be opening their gardens in aid of the Petersham Environment Trust. The ten gardens, which includes Petersham Lodge, are all near River Lane. 22 May, 11am-5pm. £10. Richmond upon Thames TW10 7AG. petershamopengardens.org

- **Suffolk Plant Heritage Spring Plant Fair**

Specialist nurseries, artisan exhibitors, conservation zones and workshops make up the Suffolk Plant Heritage Spring Plant Fair at Helmingham Hall. 29 May, 10am-4pm. £7. Helmingham Hall, Helmingham, Stowmarket, Suffolk IP14 6EF. Tel 01473 890799, helmingham.com

- **Orchid Show**

A chance to see exotic displays of orchids, speak to experts and choose from a wide selection of unusual orchids on sale from specialist growers at the Sheffield and District Orchid Society Annual Show. 29 May, 10.30am-4pm. £2.50. Cavendish Hall, Chatsworth Estate, Edensor, Derbyshire DE45 1PJ. Tel 01773 745591, sheffieldorchids.org

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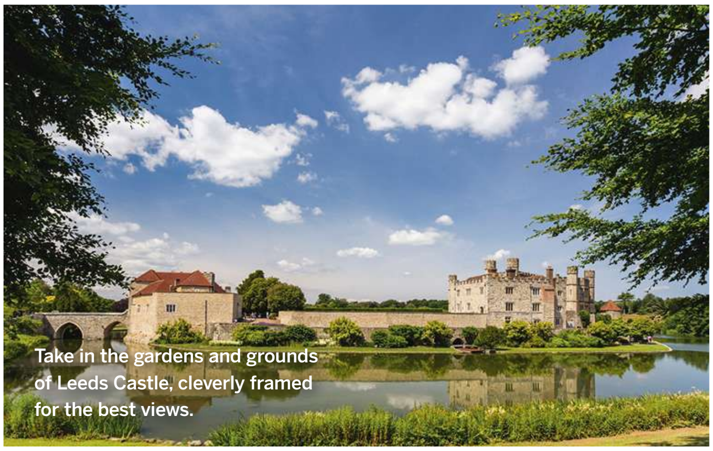
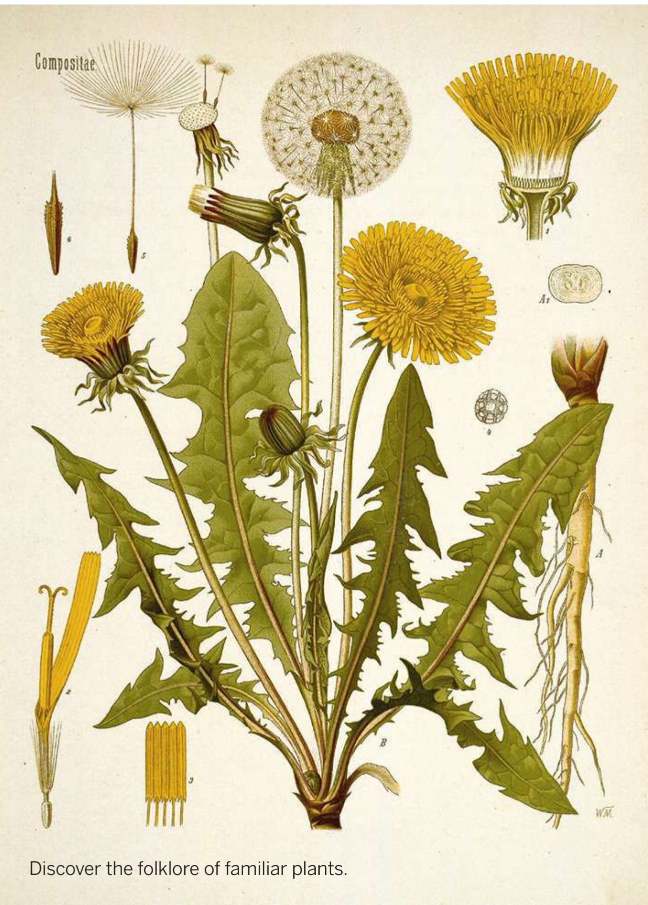
Florist Miranda Hackett gives tips on how to dress your table for an informal gathering.


Take in the gardens and grounds of Leeds Castle, cleverly framed for the best views.



Discover the folklore of familiar plants.

Chelsea Fringe 21 May – 12 June

Now in its fifth year, the Chelsea Fringe offers 23 days, four weekends and a Bank Holiday Monday full of gardening talks, exhibitions, workshops and community celebrations all focused on horticulture

Desert Island Plants

Garden design company and shop Modern Mint wants to know the nation's favourite flower. Complete the sentence 'My Desert Island Plant would be…' with a word, paragraph or even a story, and upload with an image. Modern Mint will post the best entries on its website and on social media.

- **When** from 1 May.
- **Web** modernmint.co.uk

Behind the Wall

New Covent Garden Market is offering two free tours to see the place that inspires London's florists and learn about the history of this the UK's largest wholesale flower market.

- **When** 18 May and 21 May, 7-8.30am. New Covent Garden Market, Vauxhall, London SW8 5BH. Please book via eventbrite.co.uk
- **Tel** 020 7501 3495.
- **Web** newcoventgardenmarket.com

Take a View

Floral picture frames will be springing up across the Leeds Castle estate during Chelsea Fringe. Festooned with colourful plants and flowers, step into the cleverly placed floral frames and take a 'selfie' in front of some of the best views of the 900-year-old castle.

- **When** 21 May – 12 June. £24.50. Leeds Castle, Maidstone, Kent ME17 1PL.
- **Tel** 01622 765400.
- **Web** leeds-castle.com

Exploring Arcadian Thames

To celebrate the 300th anniversary of the birth of Lancelot 'Capability' Brown, garden historians Chris Sumner and Susan Darling, and Sally Williams from London Parks and Gardens Trust lead a walk along the Thames towpath from Kew to Richmond to view what remains of the landscapes designed by Brown on both sides of the river.

- **When** 21 May, 2-4.30pm. £5.
- Meet at 2pm outside the Cricketers Pub, Kew Green, Kew TW9 3AH.
- **Web** londongardenstrust.org

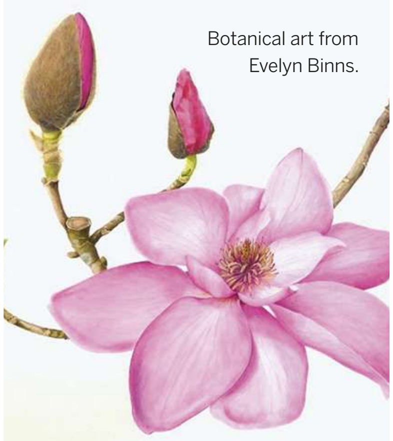
Get Tied Up

Free drop-in workshops with Inner Temple head gardener Andrea Brunsendorf, who will show you how to create hand-tied bouquets with flowers easily grown at home. There will also be a special floral installation in the Peony Garden during the Fringe.

- **When** 22 May, 11am-3pm. Inner Temple Garden, London EC4Y 7HL (via Tudor Street).
- **Tel** 020 7797 8243.
- **Web** innertemple.org.uk

MIRANDA HACKETT; MAURICE CROOKS / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO

The workings of New Covent Garden Market revealed in a tour.



Botanical art from Evelyn Binns.

Learn how to create a simple, hand-tied bouquet at Inner Temple Garden.

Plants and People: Folklore

Explore the new 'Plants and People' trail at Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park. The trail explores the relationships between plants and people and considers traditional beliefs, herbal remedies, traditional customs, religious festivals, sayings, riddles, tales and legends.

- **When** 22 May, 1.30-3.30pm. Free but booking essential. Tower Hamlets Cemetery Park, Mile End, London E3 4PX.
- **Tel** 020 8983 1277.
- **Web** fothcp.org/chelsea-fringe

The Painted Garden

An exhibition of watercolour paintings and other works by Evelyn Binns and Mary-Clare Cornwallis, two established artists who share a love of flowers, plants, birds and animals.

- **When** 25 May, 11am-8pm, 26 May, 11am-6pm. The Sloane Club, 52 Lower Sloane Street, London SW1W 8BS.
- **Web** evelynbinns.com, cornwallisart.co.uk

Art and Gardens Trail on the Ross of Mull and Iona

Visit Inner Hebridean open gardens and learn how the owners have worked with the variable and often harsh conditions to create their garden havens. Rural craft activities and demonstrations, too. See Facebook page for details of which gardens are open.

- **When** 27-30 May, 12-6pm. £5.
- **Tel** 01681 700668.
- **Web** facebook.com/Art-and-Gardens-Trail-on-the-Ross-of-Mull-and-Iona-248890458782716/?fref=ts

Best in Show: An Evening of Poetry and Flower Dog Sculptures

The Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery presents acclaimed poet Edward Barker who will read a special selection of verse from around the world. He'll be surrounded by flower dog sculptures made out of delicate silk flowers by artist Robert Bradford especially for the Chelsea Fringe.

- **When** 2 June, 6.30-8.30pm. Rebecca Hossack Art Gallery, 2a Conway Street, London W1T 6BA.
- **Tel** 020 7436 4899.
- **Web** rebeccahossack.com

A Floral Soirée

Enjoy an evening of floral creations from exclusively designed cocktails to floral-inspired treats from The Hinds Head's unique kitchen, while watching the creation of a floral tablescape by Miranda Hackett Flowers.

- **When** 2 June, 7.30-9.30pm. £25. The Hinds Head, High Street, Bray, Berkshire SL6 2AB.
- **Tel** 01628 626 151 or email reservations@hindsheadbray.com

Babylon Plants Open Day

This wholesale nursery, usually open only to trade, is open to the public as part of the Fringe. Browse the nursery stock, view the cut-flower beds and enjoy the wild-flower meadow. Plants available at wholesale prices.

- **When** 11 June, 10am-4pm. Babylon Plants, The Stables, Chestnut Farm, Cuxham, Oxfordshire OX49 5ND.
- **Tel** 01491 614558.
- **Web** babylonflowers.co.uk

This is just a selection of events taking place; find out more at chelseafringe.com. Please check all details and any necessary booking details before attending any event. Follow events at the Chelsea Fringe at:
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twitter.com/ChelseaFringe
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NEW COVENT GARDEN MARKET; ANDREA BRUNSENDORF

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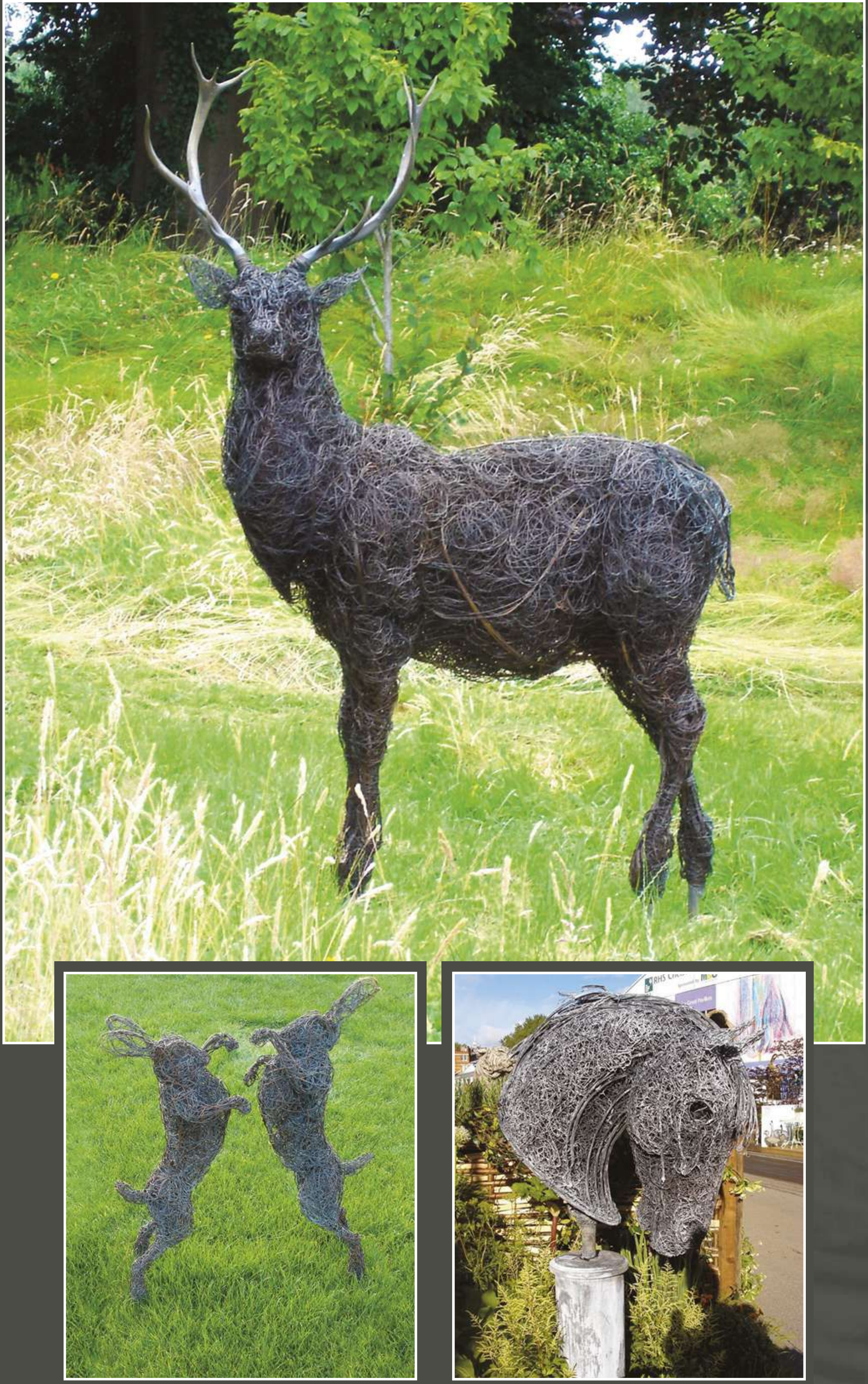

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Get kitted out

with great ideas from the Chelsea Flower Show

COMPILED BY ROSANNA MORRIS

Eleanor Lakelin cedar wood vessel *Eroding Form*, (37cm x 37cm x 17cm), £3,000, 07944 811675, eleanorlakelin.com

Stud Bench, (1.5m wide), £2,295, 07765 188725, oxfordplanters.co.uk

Log burner, £780, 01772 644903, mkmcreations.co.uk

Paper white ceramic, (68cm x 37cm), £700, 020 8558 4734, lucysmith.org.uk

Traditional planter, from £255, 01299 827059, arthurjack.co.uk

John Soane wall lantern, from £762, 020 7731 8886, hectorfinch.com

Contemporary garden arch, from £395, 01403 865950, mooredesigns.co.uk

Splash Lounge Collection bench, in New England finish, from £2,200, 01420 588444, gazeburvill.com

Eryngium outdoor cushion, £65, botanicalcushions.com

• **Turn over** for more products

Get kitted out

with great ideas from the Chelsea Flower Show

Big Green Egg large, £850,
0843 216 2805,
shop.biggreenegg.co.uk

Classic Shepherd's Hut, from £22,225,
01300 348414, plankbridge.com

Trendy Trilby, £45,
kirakuclothing.com

Kildare boots in walnut,
£269, 01608 677622,
dubarryboots.com

Leather kneeler,
£30, 0344 245 8098,
shop.gardensillustrated.com

Linen shirt,
£98, kirakuclothing.com

Moss Poc-kit, £14.95,
0114 233 8262,
burgonandball.com

Eleanor Lakelin ash wood
vessel *Hollow Form*,
(19cm x 19cm x 16cm),
from £950, 07944 811675,
eleanorlakelin.com

Feature wall planter, £295,
01772 644903,
mkmcreations.co.uk

William Morris Strawberry Thief Gardener's Gloves, £12.99, 01963 269077, briersltd.co.uk

Large oak obelisk (180cm x 63cm), £600 each,
01728 684433, woodengardenobelisk.co.uk

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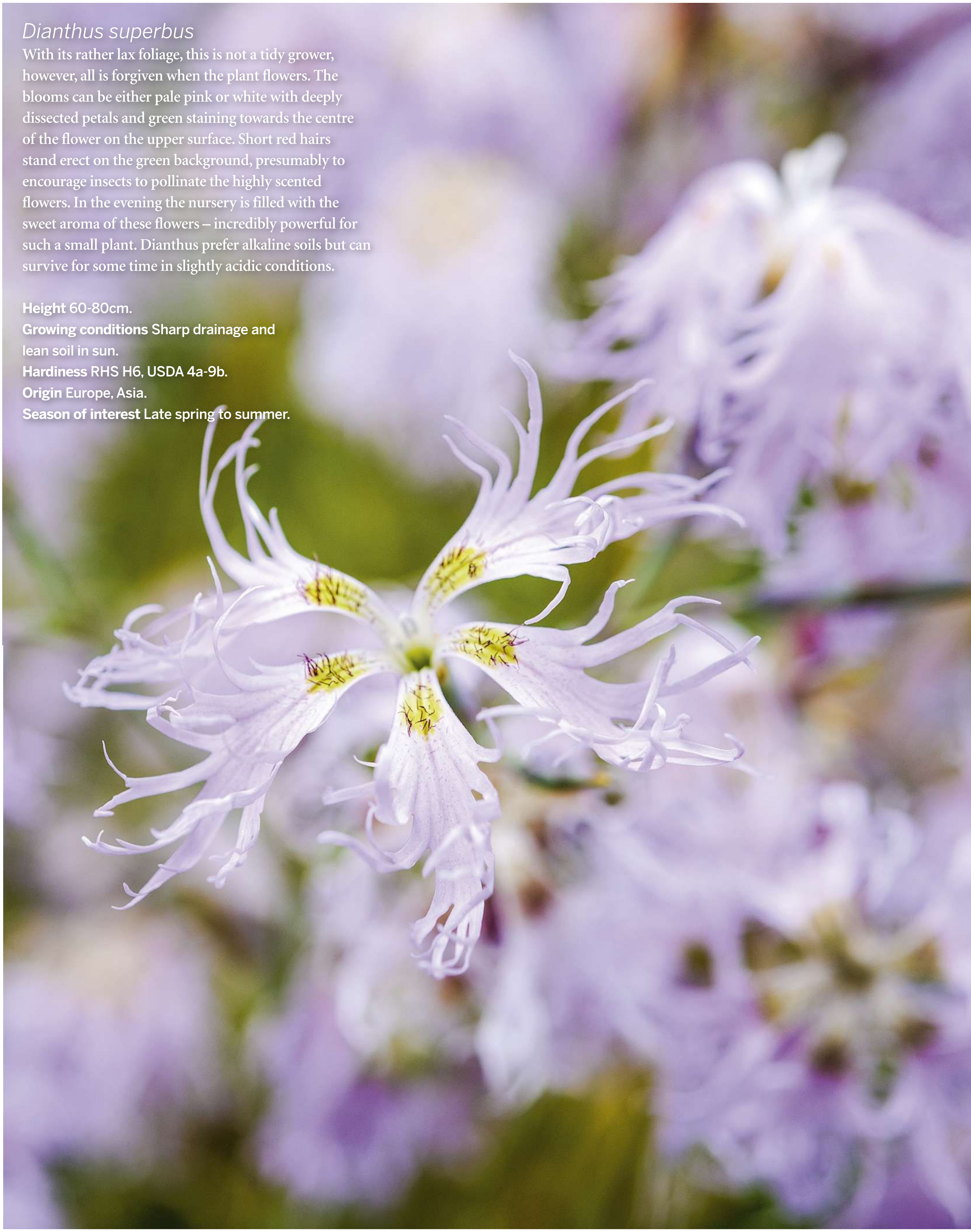


Dianthus superbus

With its rather lax foliage, this is not a tidy grower, however, all is forgiven when the plant flowers. The blooms can be either pale pink or white with deeply dissected petals and green staining towards the centre of the flower on the upper surface. Short red hairs stand erect on the green background, presumably to encourage insects to pollinate the highly scented flowers. In the evening the nursery is filled with the sweet aroma of these flowers – incredibly powerful for such a small plant. Dianthus prefer alkaline soils but can survive for some time in slightly acidic conditions.

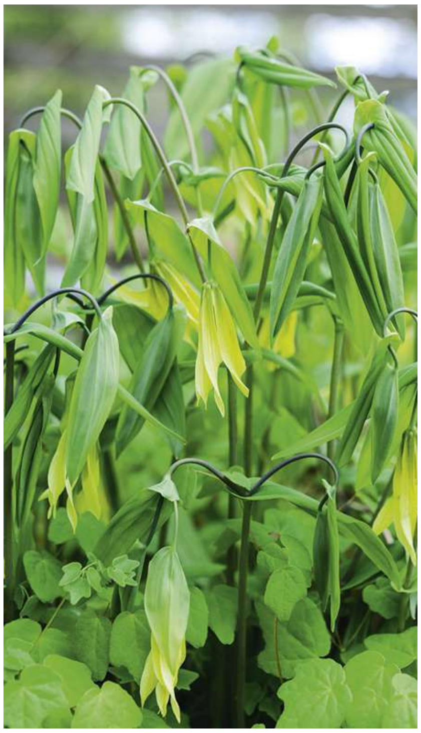
Height 60-80cm.
Growing conditions Sharp drainage and lean soil in sun.
Hardiness RHS H6, USDA 4a-9b.
Origin Europe, Asia.
Season of interest Late spring to summer.

May plants

Plantswoman and ecologist Marina finds plants that provide interesting features, colours and sweet aromas, which will also keep bees busy

WORDS MARINA CHRISTOPHER PHOTOGRAPHS JASON INGRAM

Marina Christopher is a plantswoman who owns Phoenix Perennial Plants in Hampshire*.



Uvularia grandiflora var. *pallida*

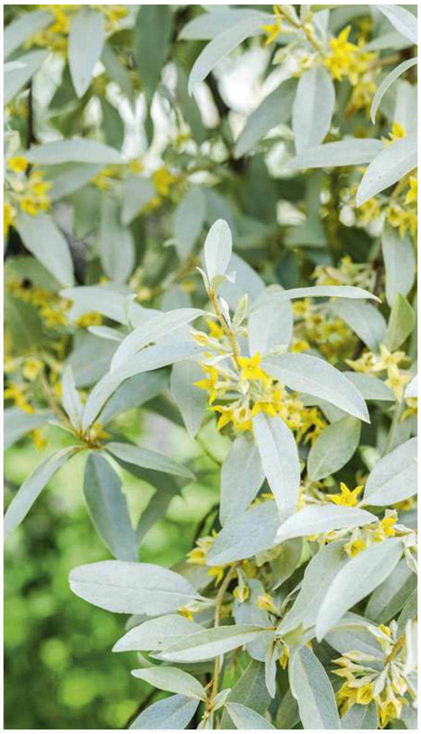
I love spring woodlanders even though they are so ephemeral. Each day produces new promise as plants emerge and flower before the woodland canopy closes to leave them in deep shade. This form of merrybells has pale, greenish-yellow, pendent flowers on willowy, arching stems and simple, lance-shaped leaves. The six slender petals are gently twisted and sway in the slightest breeze. They are clump-forming and multiply by seed or by creeping rhizomes, and are delightful with epimediums. *Anemone nemorosa* and eythroniums.

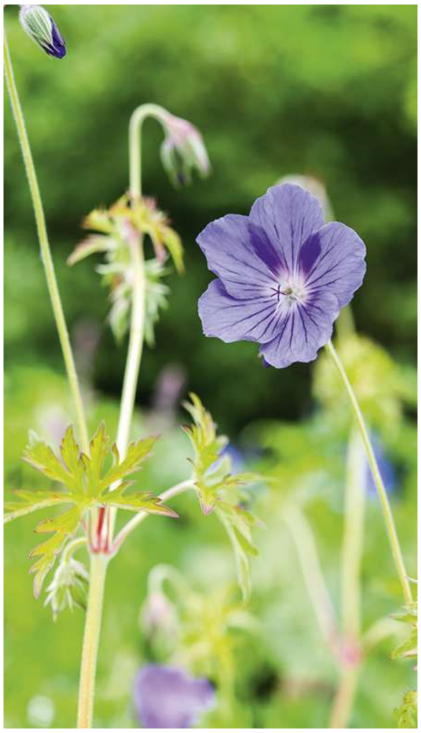
Height 30-60cm.
Origin Eastern USA.
Growing conditions Moisture-retentive, humus-rich soil in dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 4a-9b.
Season of interest Late spring.

Elaeagnus 'Quicksilver'

This is a lovely, deciduous, silver-leaved shrub, which can rapidly grow to 3m. In late spring, when the leaves have emerged (silver above with rust-coloured hairs below), clusters of small, highly scented, tubular, yellow flowers appear in the leaf axils. The sweet fragrance can be overpowering but during the day the bees satiate themselves with nectar. This shrub reaches its zenith then suddenly branches die back and the whole plant succumbs. However, as it has a suckering habit, there are usually suckers nearby that will grow rapidly to fill the gap.

Height 3-4m.
Origin Caucasus.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil and full sun.
Hardiness RHS H5, USDA 6a-9b.
Season of interest Late spring to autumn.





Geranium 'Orion'

In the late 1990s, Dutch nurseryman Brian Kabbes discovered a seedling of the hardy, mound-forming *Geranium* 'Brookside' (a hybrid between *G. clarkei* 'Kashmir Purple' and *G. pratense*) that had darker blue and much larger flowers than its parent. Electric purple veins guide insects to the central white disc, which must produce copious nectar as bees are drawn to the blooms in their droves, despite the plant being sterile. It does not produce seed so has an extended flowering season. AGM†

Height 60-75cm.
Origin Hybrid raised in the Netherlands.
Growing conditions Reasonable soil in sun or dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 5a-9b.
Season of interest Late spring to autumn.

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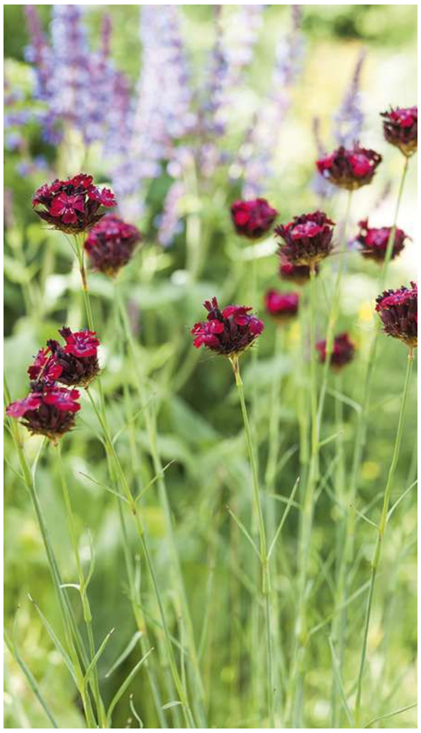
*Open by appointment only. Email marina@phoenixperennialplants.co.uk for details. †Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society.



Dianthus cruentus

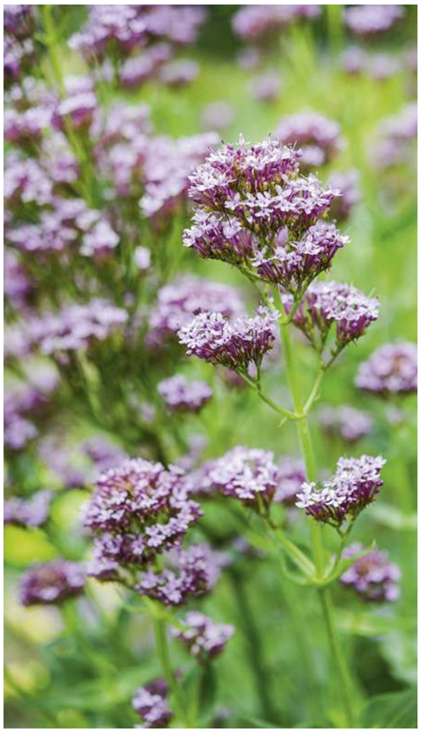
Neat mounds of grass-like foliage give rise to wiry flowering stems with clusters of small, blood-red flowers, usually with bright blue stamens. I say 'usually' as I found that my plants seldom set seed; a mystery to me until some observant friend pointed out that most plants were either all-male (hence blue stamens) or all-female with a white stigma, and few were both sexes on the same plant. The flower heads look like fireworks, and work well with smaller grasses such as *Stipa tenuissima* or *Eragrostis curvula* 'Totnes Burgundy'.

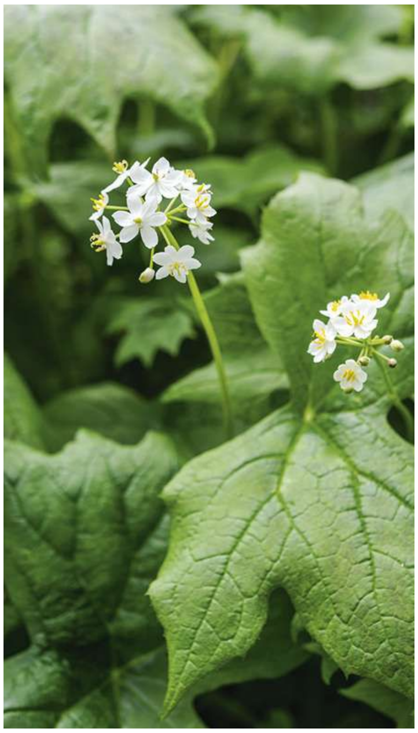
Height 45-60cm.
Origin Balkans.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil in sun, preferably neutral to alkaline.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest Spring to late summer.

Centranthus lecoqii

This is an unusual pale lilac-mauve flowered species, endemic to southern France, and north and east Spain, adding to the colour spectrum of our native *C. ruber,* which appears in white and various pink and red hues. A powerful magnet for pollinating insects (although the odour of the blooms en masse is not pleasant), it is a favourite nectar source for the migrant hummingbird hawkmoth, an occasional visitor to the British Isles. Will repeat flower if cut to the ground after the first flush.

Height 60-75cm.
Origin Northern and eastern Spain, southern France.
Growing conditions Well-drained, preferably alkaline-poor soil in sun.
Hardiness RHS H4.
Season of interest Late spring to autumn.





Diphylleia cymosa

A choice and unusual woodlander related to *Podophyllum*, with huge 30cm-wide leaves rounded in outline but cleft almost in half with jagged margins. They erupt neatly folded from the soil in late spring, hence its common name umbrella leaf. It has clusters of small, pristine-white flowers with yellow stamens atop slender stems, followed in late summer by beautiful, dark-blue, rounded fruits. It requires shelter from strong winds as the emerging foliage is susceptible to damage. Clump-forming, try growing from seed or dividing the rhizomes to increase.

Height 75-90cm.
Origin Eastern North America.
Growing conditions Moisture-retentive, humus-rich soil in dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest Spring to summer.

Places to visit

Recommended places to see seasonal plants at their best

One of my favourite gardens to visit in spring is **The Old Rectory** at Farnborough near Newbury, which is open for the National Gardens Scheme on 22 May (2-5.30pm). It was the home of the late poet laureate John Betjeman, and the current owners have created a tranquil garden full of choice plants, including a woodland walk with sheets of bluebells and wild garlic, stunning herbaceous borders and a rose garden. *Anemone nemorosa* cultivars compete with primulas, while polygonatums grow cheek by jowl with rare ferns and other woodland treasures. The owners are developing a bog area. The Old Rectory, Wantage, Berkshire OX12 8NX. Tel 01488 638298, ngs.org.uk

The Old Rectory in Berkshire.

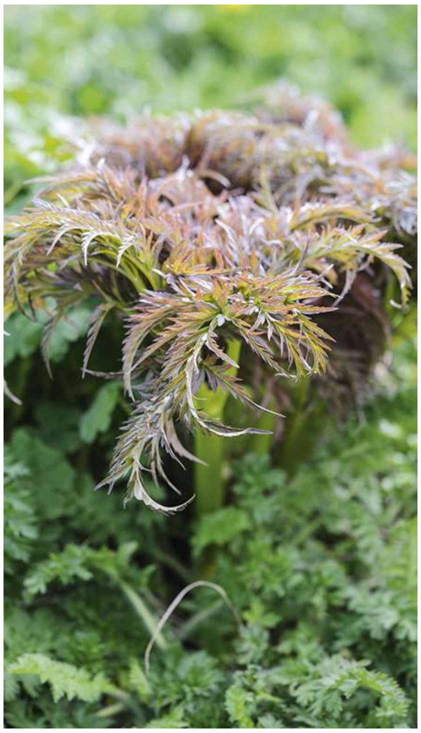
JOHN GLOVER / ALAMY

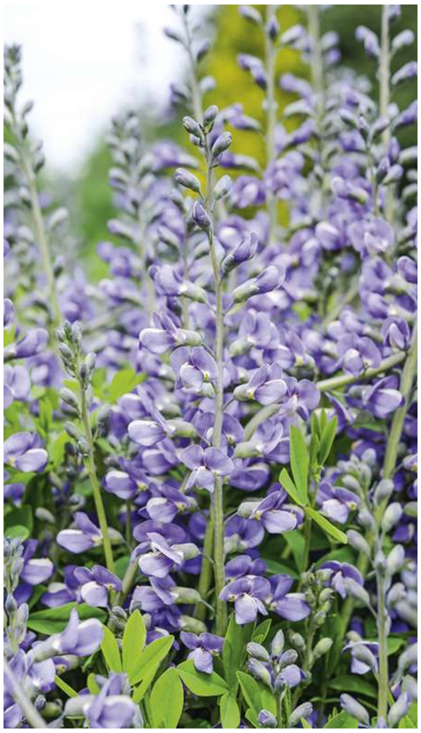
Swathes of *Centranthus ruber* (red valerian) can be

Molopospermum peloponnesiacum

What a tongue-twister for a reliably perennial umbellifer with incredible dissected, dark-green foliage and large, yellowish flower heads in early summer. Emerging from the ground in late spring, it unfurls its handsome bronzy-green leaves as it grows on stout stems to a metre or so in height and girth. Flowering stems borne above the foliage bear greenish-yellow umbels that mature in late summer with clusters of golden-winged seeds that add dramatic skeletal beauty into the autumn.

Height 1.2m.
Origin Despite its name, southwest Europe.
Growing conditions Moisture-retentive soil in sun or dappled shade.
Hardiness RHS H5.
Season of interest Late spring to autumn.





Baptisia 'Purple Smoke'

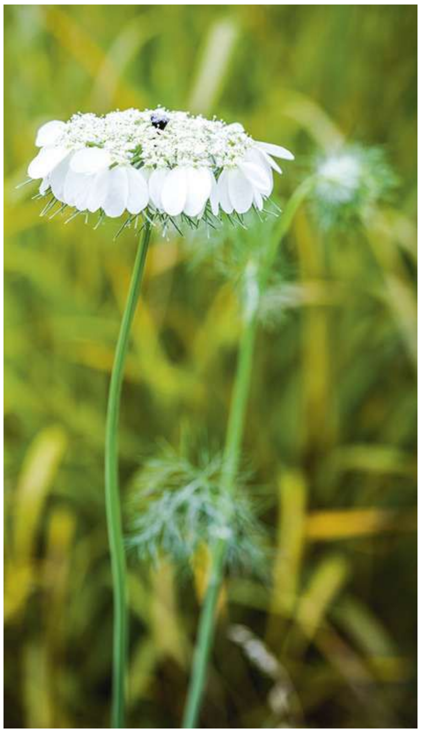
In the mid-1990s there was renewed interest in the genus *Baptisia*, a member of the pea family, which produces multiple stems with terminal flower spikes in white, yellow, pink, blue and indigo. Most familiar in British gardens is *Baptisia australis*, a blue-flowered species with upright stems. *Baptisia* species are promiscuous and the late Rob Gardner of the North Carolina Botanical Garden introduced *Baptisia* 'Purple Smoke' in 1996, a hybrid between *B. australis* var. *aberrans* and *B. albescens* with dark stems and purplish-blue flowers.

Height 1.2m.
Origin Eastern North America.
Growing conditions Well-drained soil in full sun.
Hardiness RHS H7, USDA 3a-9b.
Season of interest Spring to summer.

Artedia squamata

I had hoped this unusual annual umbellifer might become the new *Orlaya grandiflora* but it has so far proved to be more difficult to germinate. Most umbellifers are pollinated by beetles and flies but the structure of the umbels allows predators, such as spiders, to lurk beneath the flower heads and leap out to devour pollinating insects. Several umbellifers have evolved to produce a central dark flower that fools pollinators into thinking there is an insect feeding. *Artedia squamata* goes one step further with a central tuft of purple bristles.

Height 30-45cm.
Origin Turkey, southwest Asia.
Growing conditions Sharply drained, poor soil, in full sun.
Hardiness RHS H3.
Season of interest Spring to summer.



seen along the **M4 corridor** near Swindon, where the road cutting has exposed poor chalky soil. Large colonies cling to almost vertical surfaces and increase by seed distributed by the downdraught of air from passing vehicles.

To see *Centranthus lecoqii* naturalising, then now is the time to visit the **National Trust's Woolbeding Gardens** in West Sussex. This lilac-flowered valerian has been introduced to the 'ruins' along the walk to the River Rother and has self-seeded into nooks and crannies. When I was last there in high summer, migrant hummingbird hawkmoths had discovered this small patch and were busy feeding. Woolbeding Gardens, Midhurst, West Sussex GU29 9RR. Tel 0844 249 1895, nationaltrust.org.uk/woolbeding-gardens

Woolbeding Gardens.

CHRIS LACEY / NATIONAL TRUST IMAGES

When deciduous trees start to unfurl their leaves, I love the pale, delicate greens that filter light through the woodland canopy. Visit **Sir Harold Hillier Gardens** , near Romsey, to see the most amazing trees and shrubs. Sir Harold HIllier Gardens, Ampfield, Hampshire SO51 0QA. Tel 01794 369317, hilliergardens.org.uk

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IN THE GARDEN

With so many pressing jobs to attend to, time is the key ingredient this month

WORDS **JOJO TULLOH** ILLUSTRATIONS **SARAH YOUNG**

Time is the grit in the gardening oyster. The irritant that makes things happen. There is always a right time and a wrong time to do things and the logistics of fitting all the 'to dos' into the time available can make you tear your hair out. Do you get on with the most pleasurable or the most urgent job?

Perhaps the biggest problem for all non-professional gardeners is finding time, because there is never enough. After more than a decade of allotmenteering, I've learned that there is thinking time, which can be as slow and as considered as you like, and doing time, when you should set to it with a vengeance. Now I try to decide what to do before I go to the allotment. I ignore the soft fruit bed overcome by bindweed and concentrate instead on the tasks on my list, whether it's liberating the plot's feeblest inhabitants (newly emerged beetroot and salad seedlings) from choking weeds, pruning any crossed branches in my plum trees (better done now than in winter to avoid silver leaf disease) or tying down my step-over apples.

Even on a fleeting picking visit I aim to do one thing well. I might set myself the simple task of spreading some black plastic over a bed and weighing it down with stones. I do this to warm the soil before sowing squash and courgettes direct at the end of the month. There's more plastic for another section where I want to heat up the ground for my three sisters' bed (see below). I may only have time to cut some sorrel and green onion tops for a tart, gather up all the snails I can find or run a hoe along the garlic, but I try to leave the plot looking marginally better than when I arrived.

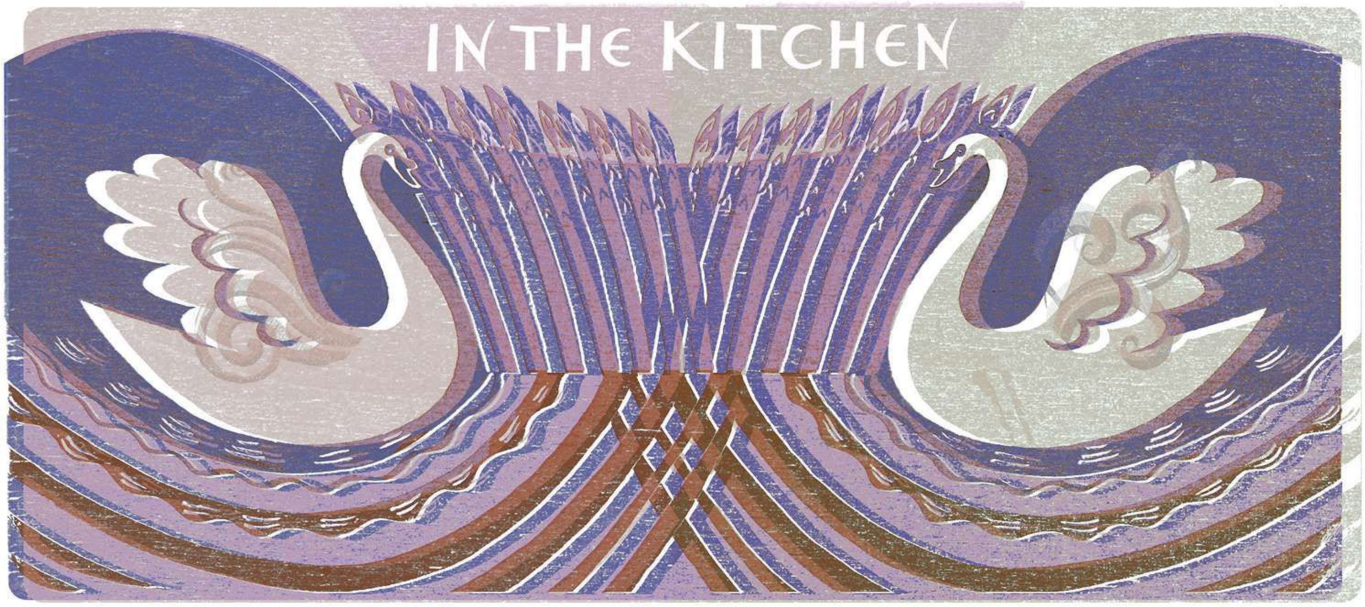
The other time to note is moon time. I have a beautiful lunar calendar poster: a rectangle of midnight blue on which the moon thins and fattens across the year. I plan to sow leaf plant seeds on a waxing moon (when the brightening, swelling moon is supposed to draw leaves up) and root vegetables on a waning moon. If you don't have a lunar calendar, commit Christina Rossetti's poem to memory:

O Lady Moon, your horns point toward the east:
Shine, be increased;
O Lady Moon, your horns point toward the west:
Wane, be at rest.

My favourite kind of allotment time is the one I lose track of, when I become so absorbed in earthing up potatoes or using a sharp spade to slice clean edges to my beds, that I become pleasurably becalmed on my plot, marooned from other responsibilities. The engrossing nature of the task at hand works as a balm on my too-busy brain. ▷

WHAT TO DO NOW

- Colourful and mutually beneficial, three sisters is a Native American planting idea that combines corn, beans and pumpkins in one bed. The beans fix nitrogen into the soil and the leaves of the squash act as a mulch and suppress weeds. The trailing squash vines support and anchor the corn and the beans grow up the corn. I add in a hazel wigwam for the beans and plant the squash in rows of three, two and three, with the corn interspersed between these two. I've gone for the Boston squash, an early cropping, bright yellow hubbard (£2.17, realseeds.co.uk) and, for added authenticity, the pole bean 'Cherokee Trail of Tears' (£2.75 for 70 seeds, realseeds.co.uk). I already have glass gem corn and, for full technicolour effect, I'm edging the sides with *Eschscholzia californica* 'Carmine King' (£1.80, chilternseeds.co.uk), a pink California poppy that attracts bees.
- If it's a drag to harden off young plants by taking them in and outside daily, or you lack space, try the Japanese brushing method to mimic outside conditions. Brush seedlings gently with a piece of card for a minute a day over two to three weeks from when they are potted on until they are ready to go out.



Asparagus season starts in May and lasts for around six to seven weeks, but for the home grower when should you start picking? The 16th-century herbalist John Gerard advises that ‘sperage’ is ready when the tender shoots are ‘of the thicknesse of the greatest swan’s quill’ or, for the more prosaically minded, when the spears reach about 15cm high. Make a cut at 5cm underground with a short, sharp knife to avoid slashing any spears about to emerge. I try to remember to take a little water container to stick the cut spears into straightaway.

Asparagus is best eaten as soon as possible after it is picked. Spears should be pared of their woody ends and cooked in a large pan of boiling salted water. The discarded ends can be thrown into the pot to add flavour to the water, which can be used in place of stock for a spring soup of asparagus and leeks. Once cooked (six to eight minutes), asparagus is superlative with butter or with a vinaigrette of good quality olive oil, white wine vinegar, salt and pepper. If you have a lot of asparagus, you might like to try serving it with a bowl of unctuous glossy hollandaise sauce. In a pan, mix three tablespoons of white wine vinegar (or wine) with two tablespoons of cold water and boil to reduce. Leave to cool, then take three large free-range egg yolks and 175g cold, unsalted butter cut into cubes and put them in a pan with the cooled reduction. Heat very slowly, whisking gently and, as it starts to melt together, increase the heat and whisk until it thickens, taking care not to overcook and scramble the yolks. Season to taste with lemon juice (or blood orange juice if you have it) and salt, and serve immediately.

If you want to take your vegetable cookery in new directions then New Zealand-born chef Peter Gordon’s latest book, *Savour: Salads for All Seasons* (Jacqui Small, £25), is a good place to start. Gordon uses the word salad loosely, defining it as ‘a mixture of ingredients, individually prepared that work in harmony together’. His eclectic approach combines vegetables (and also fish and meat) with fruits, nuts, seeds and spices and is guaranteed to shake you out of a rut. I found the final chapter on dressings particularly compelling – the following works well with grilled asparagus. Two tablespoons of sherry vinegar, one and a half tablespoons of pomegranate molasses, a teaspoon of soy sauce, half a clove of garlic finely chopped and 100ml of extra virgin olive oil. Put everything except the oil in a jam jar with a lid and shake until the molasses has dissolved. Add the oil and shake again. □

USEFUL COOKERY TIP

No. 5 *Extra tasty potatoes*

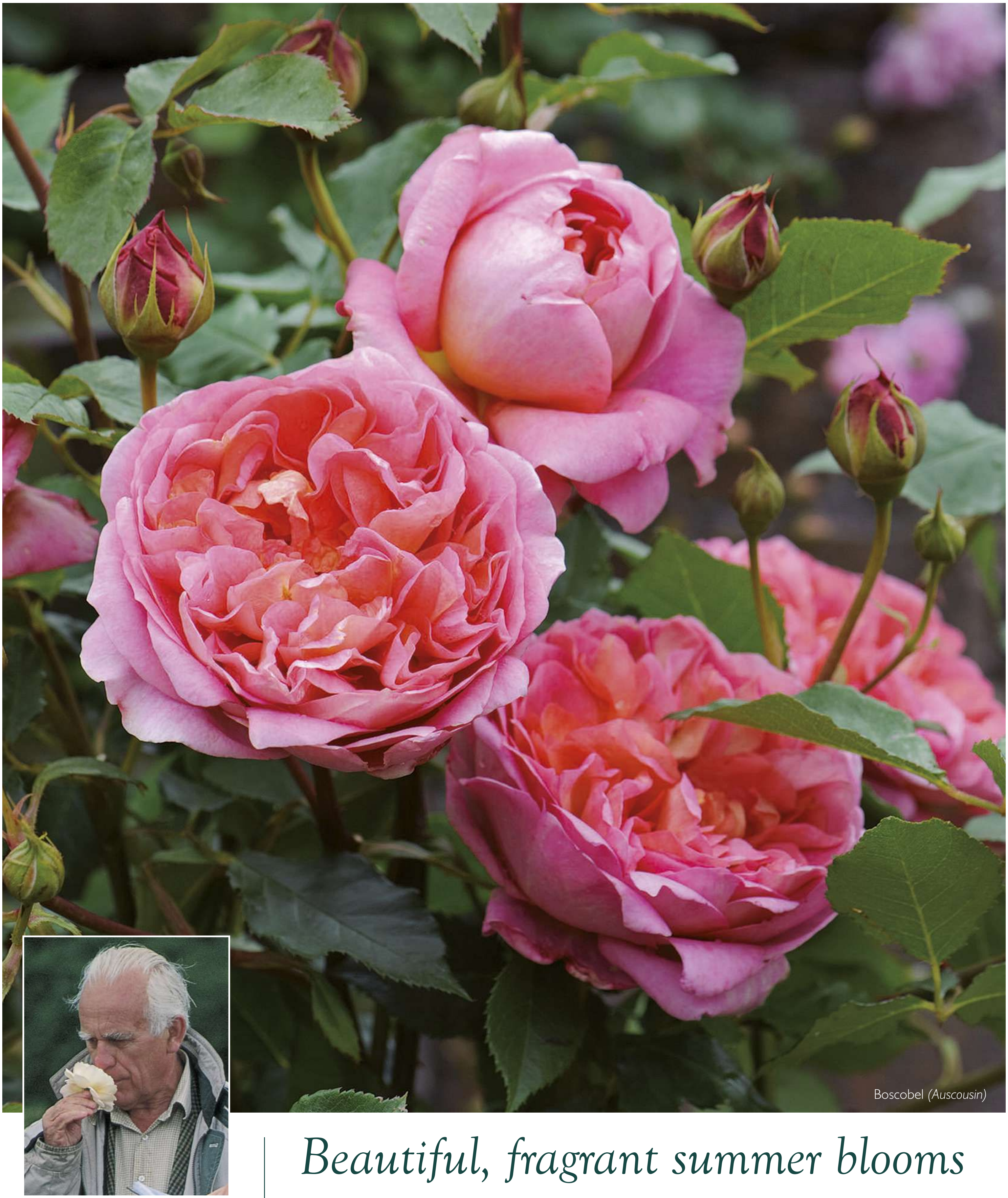
After cooking asparagus, reserve the water to boil your new potatoes in. The green-tinged water adds a subtle asparagus flavour to the potatoes.

RECIPES

Asparagus soufflé tart

Don’t be put off by the name soufflé. This is a straightforward tart in which two egg whites are whisked until stiff then mixed gently into the custard before baking. The stiff whites hold the custard up inside the shell so it’s less likely to run over and make the bottom of your pastry soggy.

First, line a 20cm tart tin with **225g shortcrust pastry**, cover with baking parchment weighed down with baking beans, and cook for 10 mins in a hottish oven (200°C) and then for another 5 mins without the parchment to give colour and ensure the bottom is crisp. Take a **bunch of asparagus (200g)** and pare off the woody ends. Then simmer in salted water until just tender (about 5 mins), refresh in cold water and drain. Chop into 1cm pieces. Mix together **1 whole egg and 2 yolks**, **225ml double cream** and **2tbsp each of parmesan and gruyère**, salt and black pepper plus a **pinch of cayenne**. Spread the asparagus over the base of the tart. Whisk **2 egg whites** until stiff and fold them into the custard very gently, then spoon the whole lot into the pastry shell. Dust a little Parmesan over the top. Cook at 200°C for 5 mins then turn down to 180°C for another 30-40 mins. The custard should be puffed up and just set. Allow to cool and serve with bitter or mustardy, dressed salad leaves.



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PORTRAIT ANDREW MONTGOMERY

What was your first plant love? After school I started an apprenticeship, studying for an NVQ in decorative horticulture, while working at Nunwick Hall. I remember a beautiful *Magnolia wilsonii* in the garden, which always grabbed my attention. I think this was also the first botanical name that eventually stuck in my mind.

Career inspiration I was inspired from an early age by my grandad in the garden: he was hard working and enjoyed the time he had in his garden, which still motivates me to succeed as a gardener today.

Who are your horticultural heroes? I'm very fortunate to be working with Dan Pearson on some exciting projects at Lowther Castle.

Describe your favourite landscapes Some of the most influential landscapes I've seen are the rich, damp forests of Tasmania with huge tree ferns and giant eucalyptus.

Three most worthwhile tips for every gardener Have a good eye for detail: it's often the smallest of details that makes a garden perfect. Patience: it might take a few attempts to achieve your goal, however, believing in your ability will bring success. Always be willing to learn from others and be open to adapting your skills.

Most valuable training My apprenticeship at Newton Rigg College. I'm a fan of apprenticeship schemes and feel that the experience from on-the-job training is invaluable for every young gardener.

Favourite planting style Trees and shrubs. I particularly love trees and the impact they have in the garden.

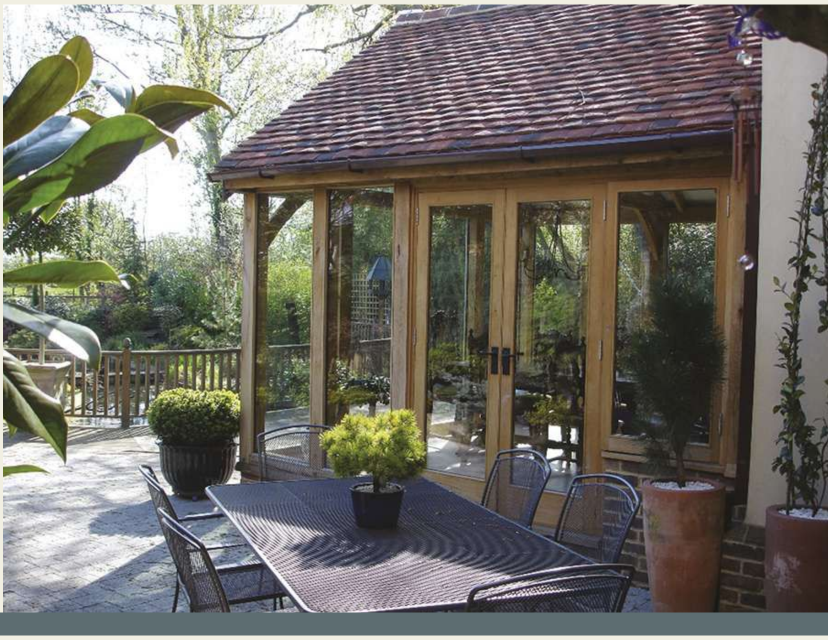
Tell us about a recent gardening challenge you've had One of the earliest achievements in the gardens at Lowther Castle was planting more than 106,000 daffodil bulbs in just under three hours with the help of over 600 volunteers. Co-ordinating this was challenging to say the least, but seeing the results year on year is always rewarding.

What heartens you about our attitudes to horticulture today? Seeing the efforts to raise the profile of horticulture to young people in schools and through community growing groups. Horticulture can be enjoyed as a hobby or as a career, so I think demonstrating the fun factor is hugely important. □

Contact martin@lowthercastle.org

Lowther Castle, near Penrith in Cumbria, is open daily. Find out more about the gardens and the ongoing renovations at lowthercastle.org.

David Salisbury
OAK



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designer garden
In brief
Name Allt-y-bela.
What Designer Arne Maynard's own garden with strong structure and colourful planting.
Where Monmouthshire.
Size Five acres.
Soil Loam and clay mix on top of clay.
Climate Sheltered, sun trap with heavy rainfall.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.
In the moment
In the third of our four-part series at Allt-y-bela, designer Arne Maynard discusses how he creates a crescendo of interesting plants for the garden in summer
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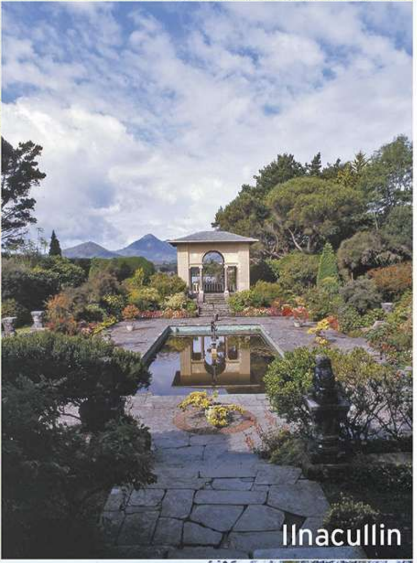
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Chelsea 2016 preview

We look at what are likely to be this year's most talked-about gardens, highlight the hottest plants and products, and take you behind the scenes on judging day

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The faces behind the gardens vying for best in show

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Behind-the-scenes look at the Chelsea judging process

55 **What not to miss this year**
The products, plants and Artisan gardens to look out for

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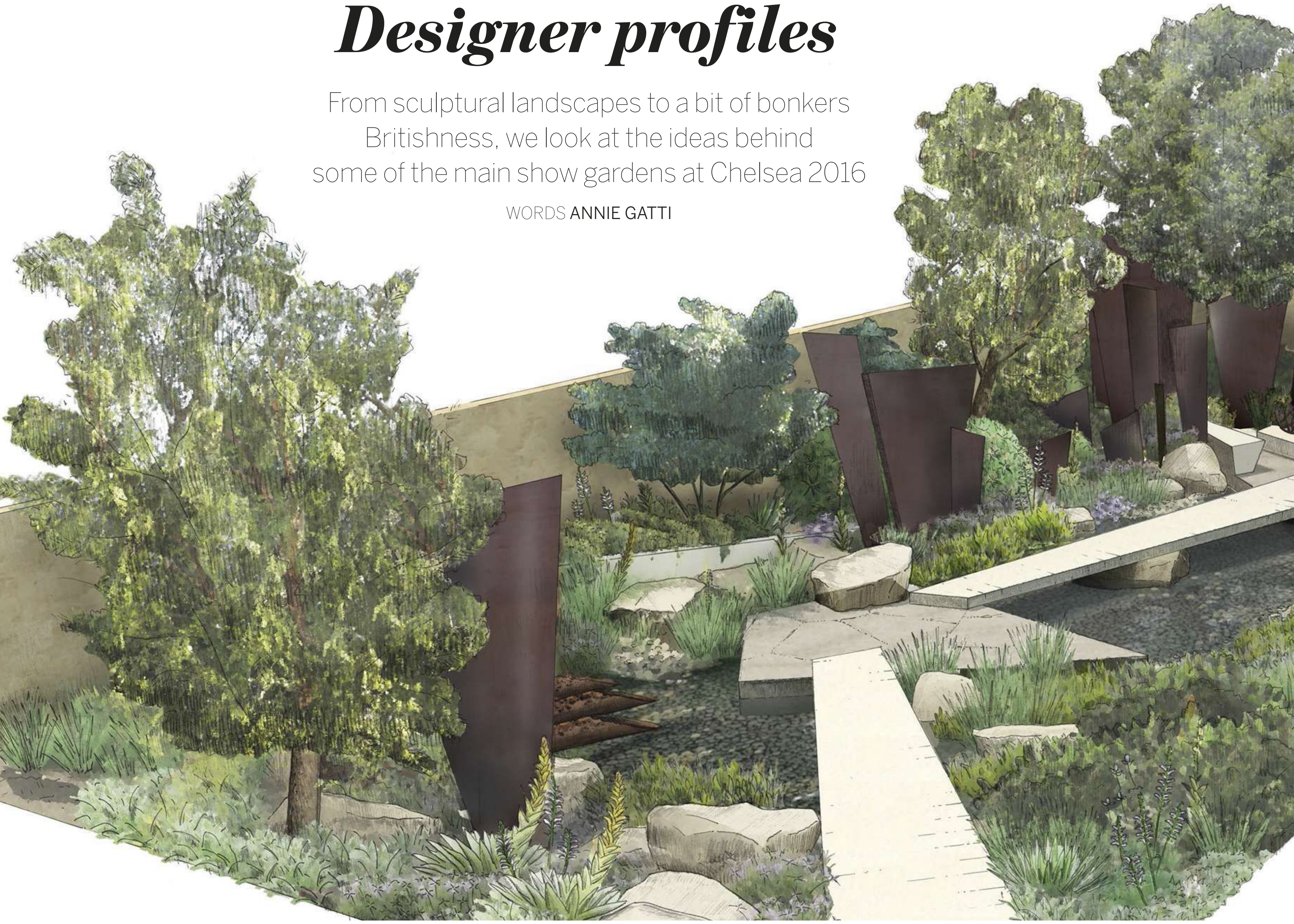
MARIANNE MAJERUS

Designer profiles

From sculptural landscapes to a bit of bonkers Britishness, we look at the ideas behind some of the main show gardens at Chelsea 2016

WORDS ANNIE GATTI



Profile

Name Andy Sturgeon.
Training Dip (Landscape), MSGD, MLI.
Chelsea history
Six gold medals, including Best Show Garden 2010.

Andy Sturgeon

Nature in its many forms – and the countryside of any country – are what feed my imagination. When I was buying plants in Spain for this garden, I was stopping the car all the time to photograph stones, the way light was falling on a rock face or some scrubby old plants in a car park.

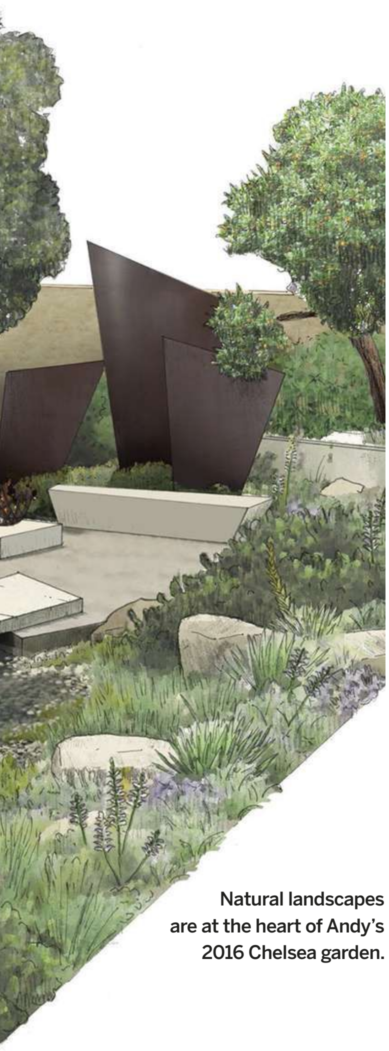
Probably one of my favourite designers at the moment is Andrea Cochran. She has the marriage of plants and sculptural architecture that I really like.

I tend to do the character and spatial definition of a garden with hard landscaping and although it contributes to the atmosphere, I often feel I can swing the mood in different directions depending on what planting style I opt for.

This garden is quite sculptural and architectural so I made a model rather than draw it. When I shaped the bronze-coated steel fins I had in mind the bony plates of a stegosaurus and I felt the character of the space had an arid feel. It is meant to be carved out of an existing landscape. I want the plants to be ones you'd never find growing together in the wild because they are from different parts of the world, but as they're from the same climatic regions they should grow happily together.

I really like bringing a modernist aesthetic to something older. I used to design mainly urban gardens but now I might get called in to do a modernist garden within a historic walled garden.

Andy's essential design elements



Natural landscapes are at the heart of Andy's 2016 Chelsea garden.

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1 Curved paths
This curving, raised path creates river-like movement down a rectangular garden by the Thames. The curves also carve out areas for sitting and opportunities for textured planting.

CREATIVE LANDSCAPE CO / MARK GILLARD

2 Sharp lines
Andy took his cue from the geometry of this timber and glass house by Huf Haus to create the granite steps that wrap around the building. Plants help to soften the sharp lines.

ANDY STURGEON

3 Links to landscape
Low, meadow planting is used to bring the landscape right up to this award-winning contemporary house, affording it an uninterrupted view across to the Sussex Downs.

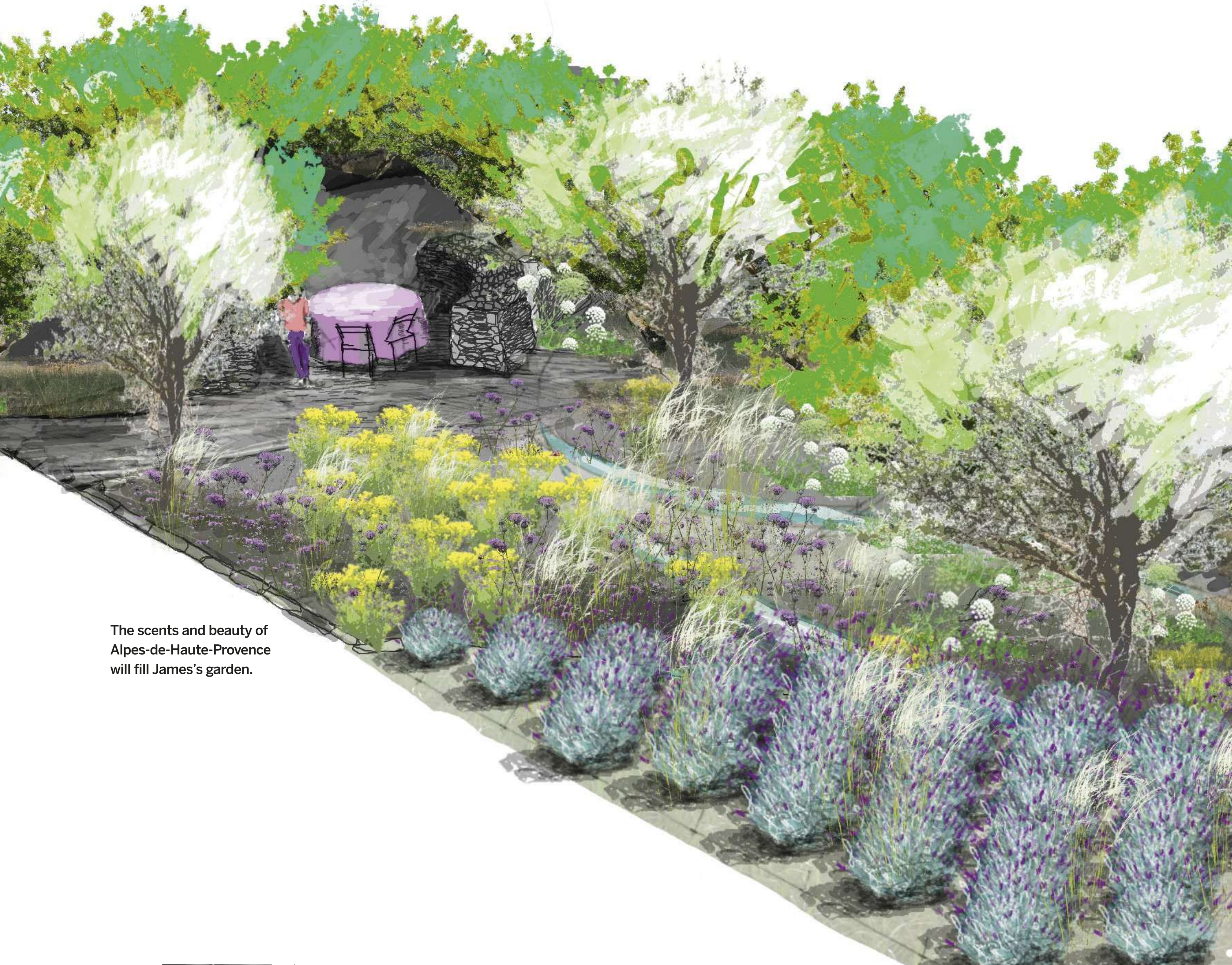
ANDY STURGEON

4 Use of clump-forming perennials
Dry-stone walls are used as a visual link between the disparate areas of this Surrey garden. Clump-forming perennials, shrubs and grasses are repeated in many of Andy's plans.

Plot MA423. **Sponsor** *The Telegraph*. **Contractor** Crocus. **Theme** A sculptural garden carved out of a rocky, arid landscape that celebrates the geology and plants of such regions.

2016 Chelsea garden (pictured above, left)

This is a boldly designed garden, both in terms of its structure and planting. Angular, bronze-coated steel fins, rising to 2.5m, seem to burst out of the limestone bedrock and create a linear flow down the garden. Chunky boulders anchor the garden in the arid landscape and sawn limestone paths and bridges drive an irregular way through the garden, with two angled slabs forming resting places. Three wide steps lead down to the largest of these paved slabs, which is partially enclosed by a cluster of fins. Here sawn pieces of limestone form seats on either side of a hand-forged steel firebowl with a bronze finish that tones with the fins and the adobe-like render on the boundary walls. Water flows from stylised, bronze-hued shoots at the front of the garden to create a shallow pool. The planting at the boundaries has a shrubby, scrubby feel from forms of *Eremophila*, *Osmanthus* and *Pistacia lentiscus*, suggesting the landscape beyond this gardened space. Andy has chosen corky barked *Schinus molle* trees and an evergreen oak, which he hopes will not be in full leaf, to evoke "a dusty, dirty" atmosphere while the lower planting in the centre of the garden features shrubs, perennials and grasses in shades of silver, olive and grey green, and with a variety of interesting textures. Sprinklings of umbels, spikes and daisies in shades of yellow, soft pink and purple, pale blue, white and orange are dotted around the edge of the garden.
Contact 01273 553336, andysturgeon.com



The scents and beauty of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence will fill James's garden.

Profile

Name James Basson.
Training BA Garden Design.
Chelsea history Two gold medals and one silver gilt.

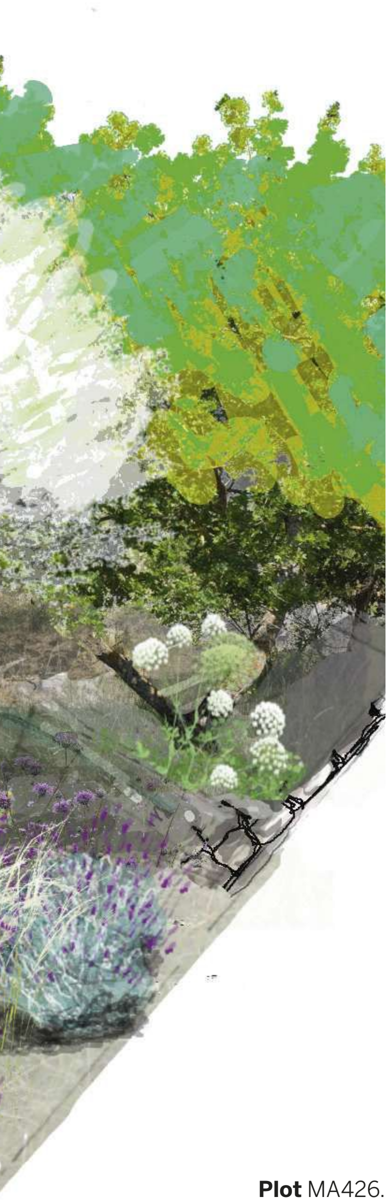
James Basson

Painting and landscape are my main sources of interest. The lofty beech forests of Beaconsfield where I grew up is one of my iconic landscapes. Now the Mediterranean is my home, and its garrigue landscape is the one I spend most of my time looking at.

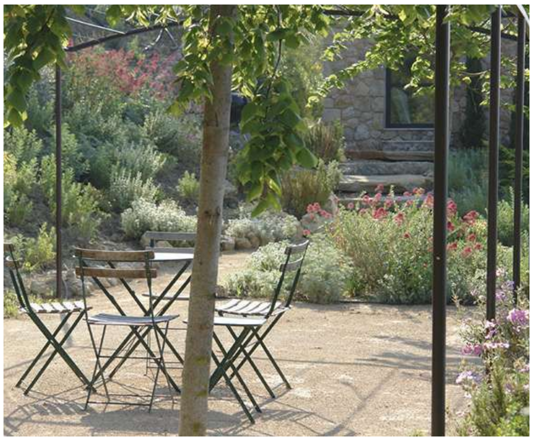
The New Zealand designer Ross Palmer, whom I worked with in London for my first two years after graduating, was a real influence in getting me to think about the ecology of plants. When I started up my own company in the south of France with my wife Helen, I knew I wanted to make gardens that were inspired by the landscape and here it had to be sustainable gardens with little or no irrigation. It was the nurseryman Olivier Filippi – who travels round the Mediterranean finding plants that survive without irrigation, propagates them and advises on how to use them in gardens – who let me see that the way I wanted to use plants was possible.

I always use local materials wherever possible not just because they're sustainable, but also because it feels right in the landscape. For example in Provence, traditionally, slopes are retained by making stone walls or with chestnut paling. I like to use both in my gardens.

Lighting and furniture make the garden distinct from the landscape. I collaborate with Jean-Philippe Weimer who integrates lighting so brilliantly into natural-looking spaces, and Catriona McLean who sources furniture with the right strength for the landscapes.

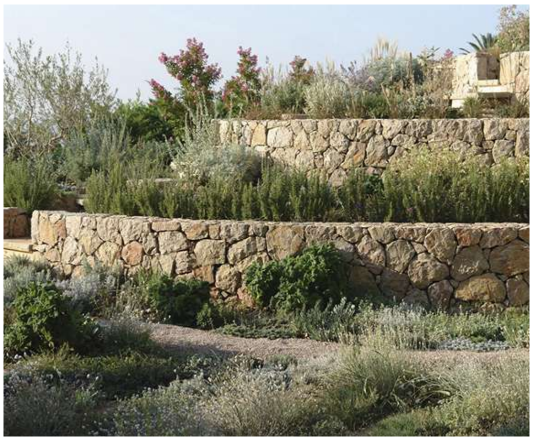


James's essential design elements



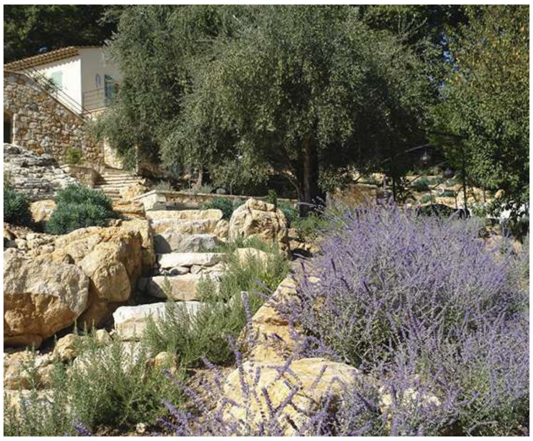
SCAPE DESIGN

1 In tune with surroundings
Traditional café-style furniture sits comfortably in this sloping garden in the south of France. The low, bushy plants link the garden to the surrounding landscape.



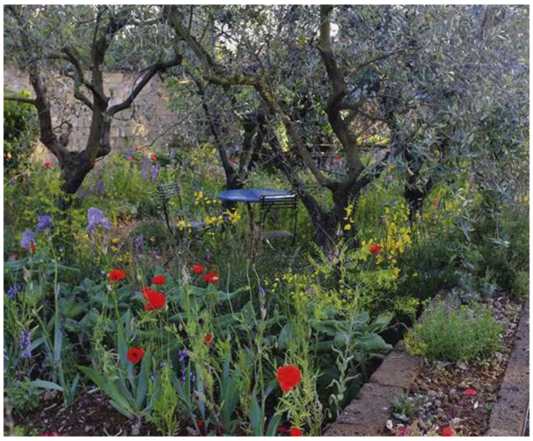
SCAPE DESIGN

2 Stone terraces
Dry stone walls create the main terraces in this sloping garden. Routes through the garden, via steps down the terraces and along a gravel path at the bottom, reveal a surprising variety of plants.



SCAPE DESIGN

3 Naturalistic landscaping
James used stones that were already on site to create this naturalistic-looking slope leading down from the new house, creating pockets of soil for the drought-tolerant planting.



SCAPE DESIGN

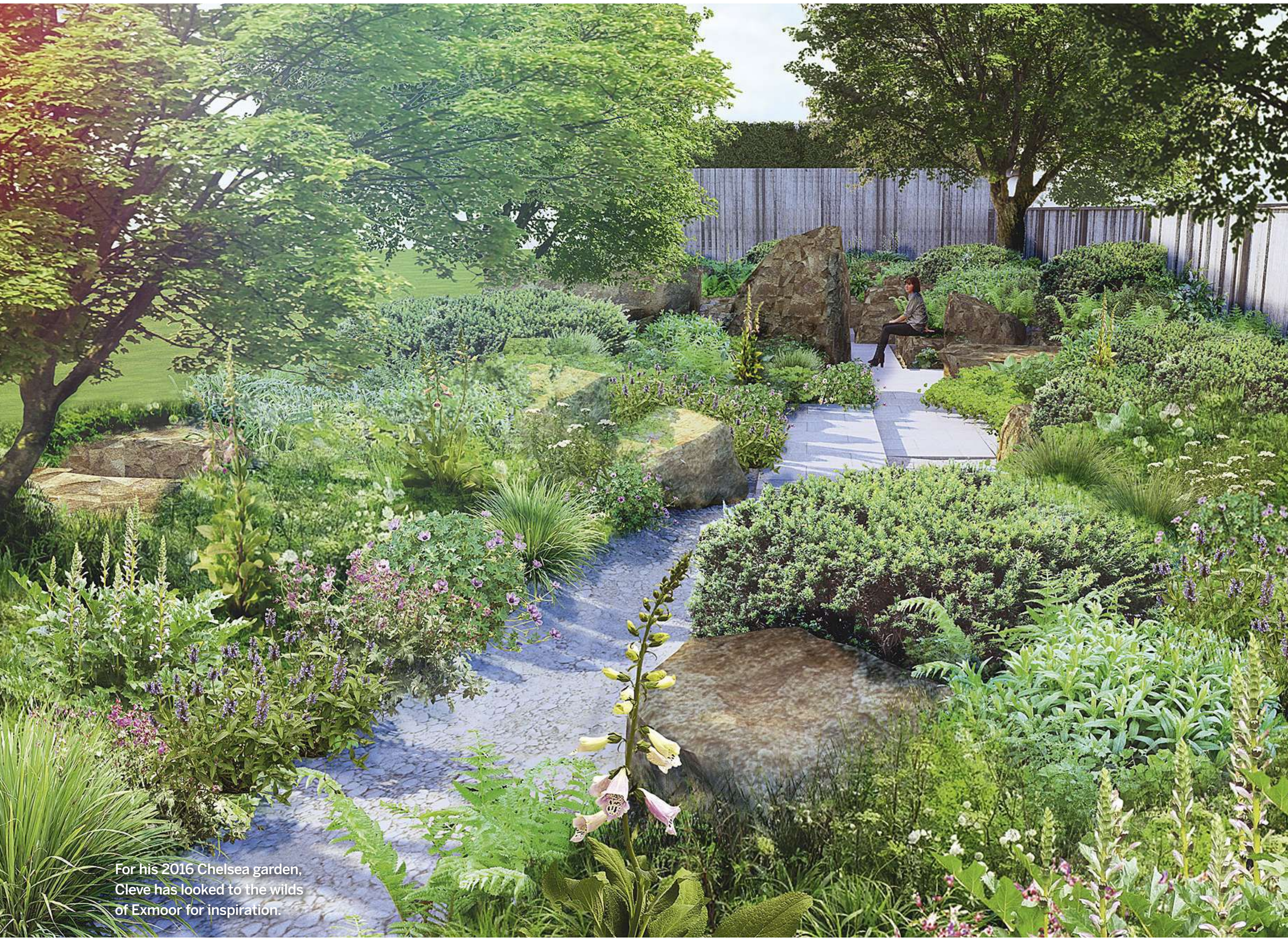
4 Local materials
In his 2015 Chelsea garden James used tufa stone, found naturally on the Provençal hillsides, for the rustic-looking water channel, the path and the pool at the back of the garden.

Plot MA426.
Sponsor L'Occitane.
Contractor Peter Dowle.
Theme The beauty of the Alpes-de-Haute-Provence landscape where L'Occitane's essential oils were first produced.

2016 Chelsea garden (pictured above, left)

As with James's 2015 garden for L'Occitane, this design draws on the Provençal landscape for inspiration. This time it's an imagined lavender field on the slopes of Alpes-de-Haute-Provence that spreads out from a dry stone wall. On the opposite boundary the garden slopes down from a hedgerow of native trees and shrubs to a low-lying stretch of pasture dotted with almond trees. From a distance the pasture has a grassy uniformity, with an overlay of eryngiums, which mountain sheep don't eat, and an undercover of yellow *Pilosella officinarum*. But close up, a series of subtly different pasture ecologies, planted in bands and spangled with flowers in shades of mauve, pink and red, is revealed. At the garden's front, slabs of uncut mottled limestone, used throughout the plot, form steps above a trickling stream that channels the run-off from the hills. The steps give on to a shale path – perhaps once a river bed – that meanders through the pasture to a terrace of limestone. This will be shaped on site by a craftsman from the region, in a traditional pattern using a framework of 'leader' pieces. An informal eating area, in the shelter of a dry stone-walled *borie* (shepherd's hut) that's been built against a stone outcrop, creates a peaceful viewpoint across the pastures to the lavender fields and white oak woodlands beyond. Behind the *borie*, another path leads up steps to a shadier, cooler area underplanted with mosses and ferns.

Contact +377 (0)97 97 15 36, scapedesign.com



For his 2016 Chelsea garden, Cleve has looked to the wilds of Exmoor for inspiration.

Profile

Name Cleve West.
Training Short course in Garden Design by John Brookes.
Chelsea history Five gold medals, including Best Show Garden in 2011 and 2012.

Cleve West

I think my background in art taught me to think spatially and how proportion and scale work in a garden. I worked in David Hockney's studio for a week before I started up my own garden maintenance business and it stands out as one of the best experiences I've had. Also, the sculptor Johnny Woodford, who I collaborated with at Hampton Court, helped me to think more laterally.

When you do show gardens you need something extra, something theatrical, to grab people's attention and sculpture can do that. I try to create opportunities for sculpture in private gardens but those opportunities don't always come up, or the client can't afford it. Funnily enough, this year's garden for M&G didn't seem to warrant any sculpture. We have the big oaks and the sandstone boulders and that feels as if it's enough. The artistry will be in stitching the boulders together, and getting the stone detailing right.

I am inspired by landscape wherever it is truthful – when you see it as it should be. I went to the Joshua Tree National Park in California recently and that blew me away, seeing plants surviving in those arid conditions and how they've adapted themselves.

If there's room and opportunity I like to create a journey through a garden. The Gibberd Garden in Essex has lovely little journeys that lead you to a sculpture or a column. There's a wonderful, mysterious flavour to the garden that I really enjoy. It's not manicured but it has its own energy.

Cleve's essential design elements

NICOLA BROWNE

1 Bold sculpture
Cleve's skill in integrating bold elements in his designs is seen in this country garden in Normandy where steel pyramids, made by a local metal worker, create a contemporary dynamic.

MARIANNE MAJERUS / MMGI

2 Informal planting
For his 2014 Chelsea garden, Cleve used informal gravel planting, around a modern take on an Islamic fountain, with knapped flint detailing. This gives way to more lush planting in raised beds.

JULIA LEAKEY

3 Mixing modern with traditional
In Cleve's 2011 Chelsea garden, simple concrete water chutes and monumental pillars by French sculptors Les Botta sit comfortably with the more traditional dry stone walling.

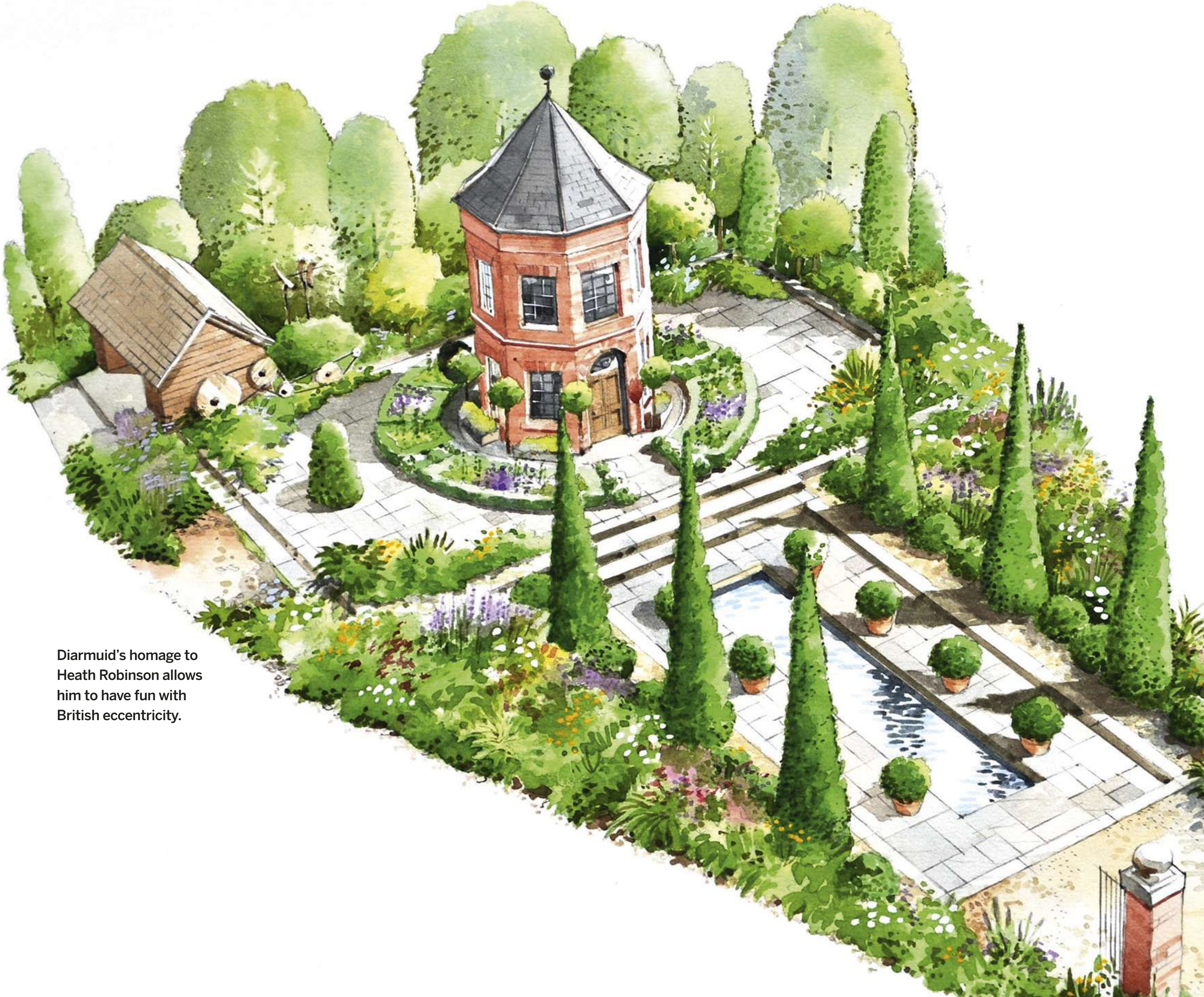
CLEVE WEST

4 Discrete areas
Cleve's design for the charity Horatio's Garden at the spinal centre at Salisbury Hospital allows patients to enjoy a number of discrete areas, surrounded by multi-sensory planting.

Plot MA15.
Sponsor M&G.
Contractor Swatton Landscape.
Theme A contemporary garden that evokes the memory of walking in the ancient woods of Exmoor.

2016 Chelsea garden (pictured above, left)

The spirit of the oak woods and sandstone outcrops of Exmoor, where Cleve spent his teenage years, suffuse the design of this garden but it is not a recreation of that landscape: the planting is more varied, the trees less wind-shaped. The garden is framed by a boundary constructed of weathered oak posts of different dimensions and depths. This silvery grey backdrop offsets the shapely *Quercus pubescens* trees that ring the garden. A sandstone gravel path leads diagonally down the garden, past randomly placed boulders and foliage-rich planting, to an imposing triangular stone where sawn sandstone paving signals a more contrived space. Here, enclosed by the triangular stone and an outsized horizontal piece, is a pool fed by a gentle waterfall, and seating carved out of more rocks. Dry stone walling made with vertically placed pieces link some of the stones, while the rusty tones of the sandstone are also reminiscent of Exmoor. Unusually for Cleve, there are no clipped forms, although the naturally mounded *Ilex* x *meserveae* Blue Angel (='Conang') and *Hedera helix* f. *poetarum* 'Poetica Arborea' are on the planting list to provide anchor points of dark green among the more relaxed grasses, such as *Deschampsia flexuosa,* ferns and perennials. There are also pinpoints of colour, predominantly in yellow and white, with *Ligusticum lucidum*, an umbellifer Cleve describes as a more refined cow parsley, likely to delight the plantaholics.
Contact 020 8977 3522, clevewest.com



Diarmuid's homage to Heath Robinson allows him to have fun with British eccentricity.

Profile

Name Diarmuid Gavin.

Training Diploma Amenity Horticulture.

Chelsea history One gold, two silver gilt, one bronze.

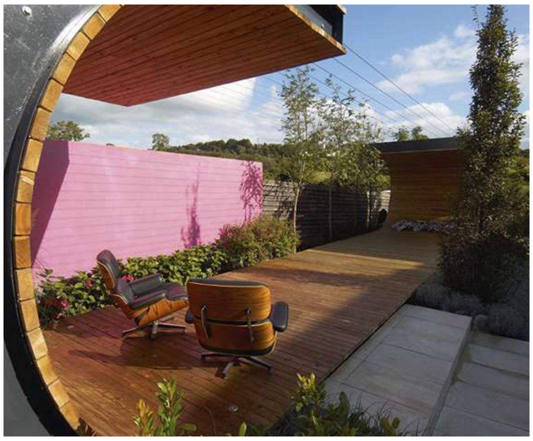
Diarmuid Gavin

When I left school I couldn't decide whether I wanted to be a chef or a gardener but then a job came up in a garden suppliers in Dublin and I met amazing people who were passionate about gardening. Even before I started college I knew that I wanted to make gardens that were different. The design part of the course wasn't good but that turned out be a great advantage as there was nobody telling me I couldn't do certain things. The first garden I made, when I was still a student, was heavily influenced by John Brookes whose books I'd read. It was a front garden with big architectural plants and gravel and railway sleepers – and it's good to see that it's still there.

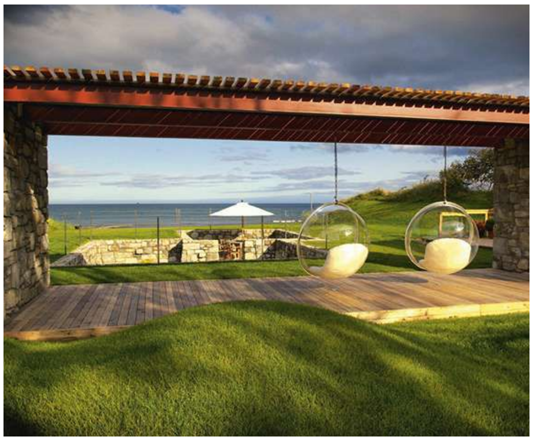
With a Chelsea garden, you get to step out of reality. You get a chance to come together with a group of amazing people and do something you can do nowhere else. The theme of this year's garden has meant that I've been able to go with flowers and bay, and beautiful *Carpinus*, and to play with the idea of what Heath Robinson might have done in a garden. It's technically very challenging, but it's been the most fun.

When you're designing a real garden for a client, your job is to listen. In the south of France, some of the gardens I do are elegantly simple, and then others are the all-singing, all-dancing, all-Jacuzzi kind. It's such a privilege to make a garden.

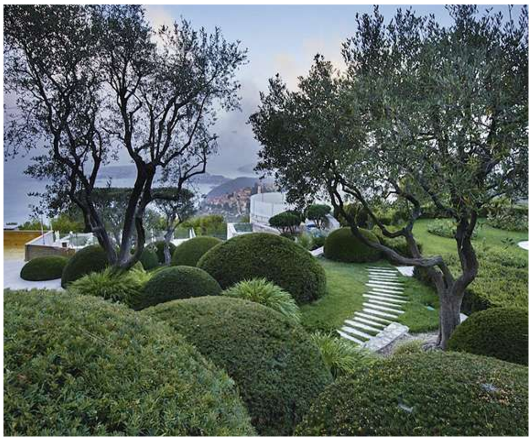
Diarmuid's essential design elements


ROBIN MATTHEWS

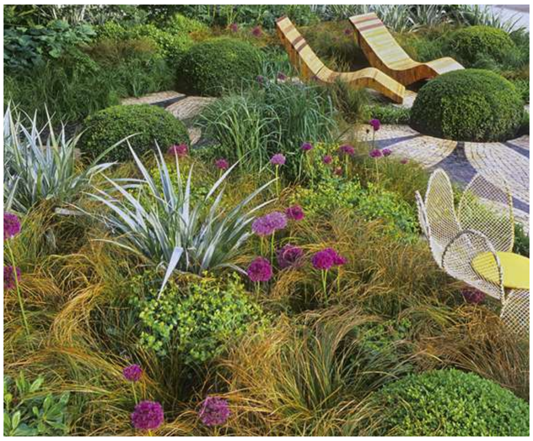
1 Bright and bold
Diarmuid chose a Luis Barragán-inspired pink wall and a curving, contemporary pavilion to bring drama to a narrow suburban garden in the west of Ireland.


ROBIN MATTHEWS

2 Focal points
Sculpted mounds of turf divide zones in this coastal garden in Co. Louth, Ireland. The stone pavilion offers uninterrupted views of the sea while a sunken terrace creates sheltered seating.


ALLAN POLLOK-MORRIS

3 Clipped hedging
Clusters of clipped yew and box spheres anchor this sloping garden on the French Riviera and create a visual link to the domed shapes of the landscape beyond the garden.

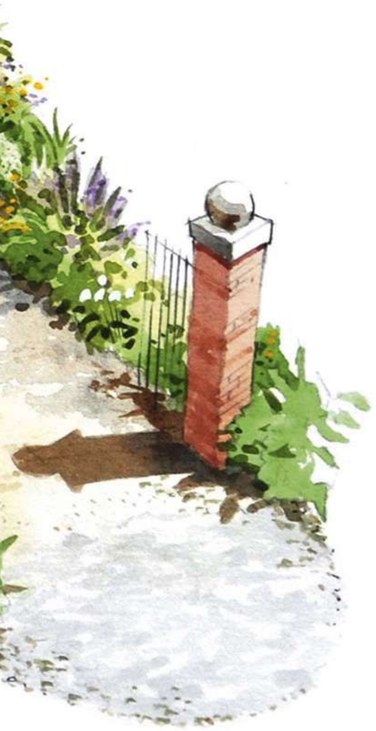

MARIANNE MAJERUS / MMGI

4 Sense of fun
Diarmuid's love of joyful elements – expressed in the daisy-shaped chairs and daisy motif in the paving of his 2007 Chelsea garden – and bold, textured plantings are recurring themes in his gardens.

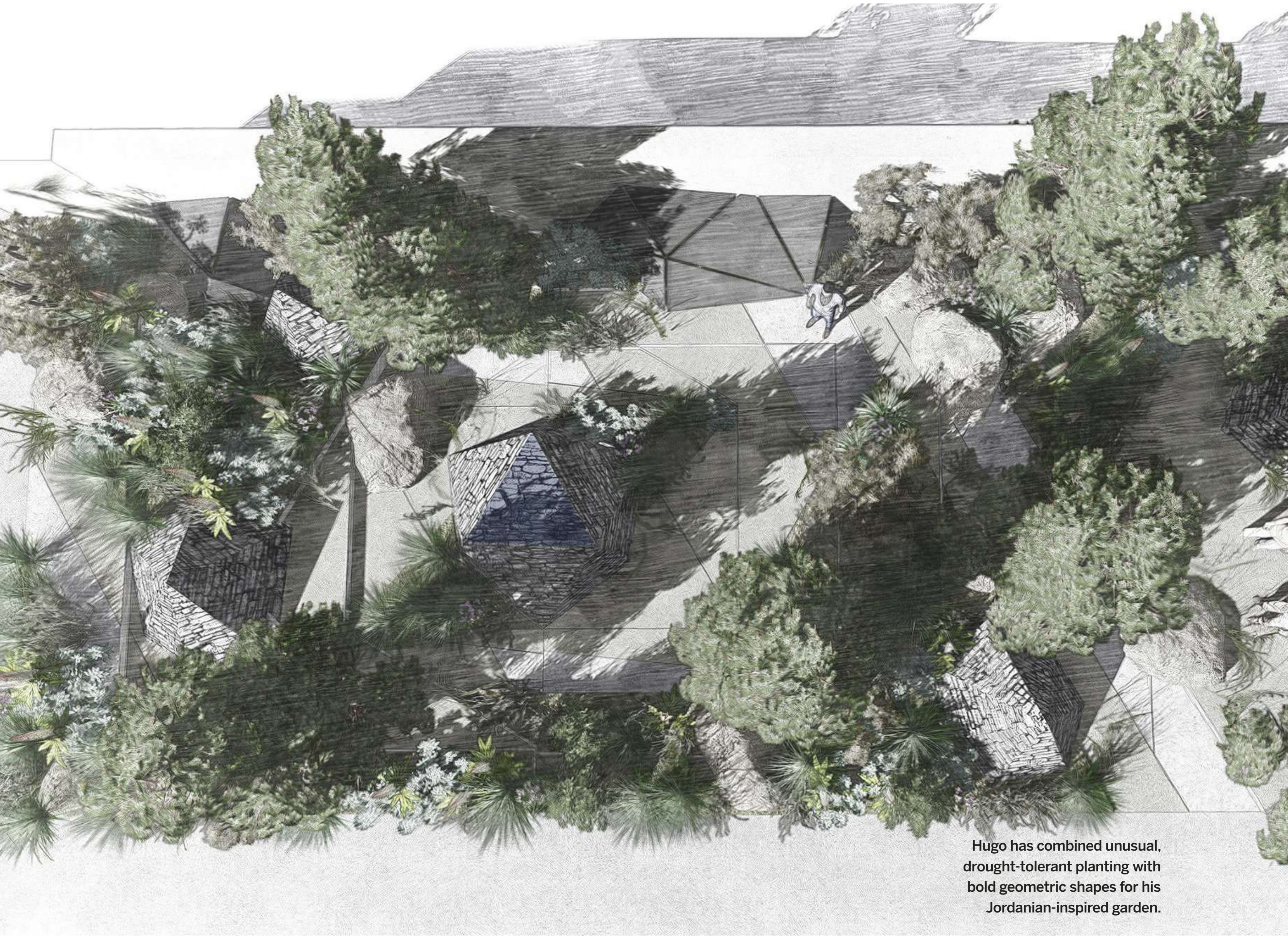
2016 Chelsea garden (pictured above, left)

At first glance this has the look of a richly planted Arts and Crafts garden, a surprising offering from Diarmuid who returns after a three-year absence. Stone pillars open on to a symmetrically laid out garden with a view down a sunken rectangular pool set in York stone and framed by clipped box spheres, bay cones and beds of Hidcote-style shrubs, perennials and grasses. Steps lead up to a generous terrace where an octagonal tower, circled by flowers, herbs and low box hedging, creates the focal point of the garden against a backdrop of domed *Carpinus betulus* trees. But linger a while and Diarmuid's flair for fun is revealed, for every 15 minutes there is a Heath Robinson-inspired mechanical performance to the tune of *English Country Garden*. First the box balls start to bob up and down; then the bay cones twirl, window boxes rise up to the first floor windows, a topiary tree revolves while mechanical shears appear to clip it and, finally, the roof of the tower lifts up. While the complex mechanics, engineered by ZAP Architecture, should bring smiles all round, the planting, which incorporates a white and sulphur scheme of *Digitalis purpurea* f. *albiflora*, *Paeonia lactiflora* 'Duchesse de Nemours', *Euphorbia epithymoides* and *Alchemilla mollis*, and combinations of blues, purples and pinks from geraniums, salvias and roses, should please lovers of the English country garden.

Contact Harrods Gardens 020 7893 8000, harrods.com



Plot TR483.
Sponsor Harrods.
Contractor Harrods Gardens/Dermot Kerins.
Theme A playfully, eccentric British garden inspired by the inventions of Heath Robinson and planted in a classically British style.



Hugo has combined unusual, drought-tolerant planting with bold geometric shapes for his Jordanian-inspired garden.

Profile

Name Hugo Bugg.
Training BA Garden Design.
Chelsea history One gold medal for his first Chelsea garden in 2014.

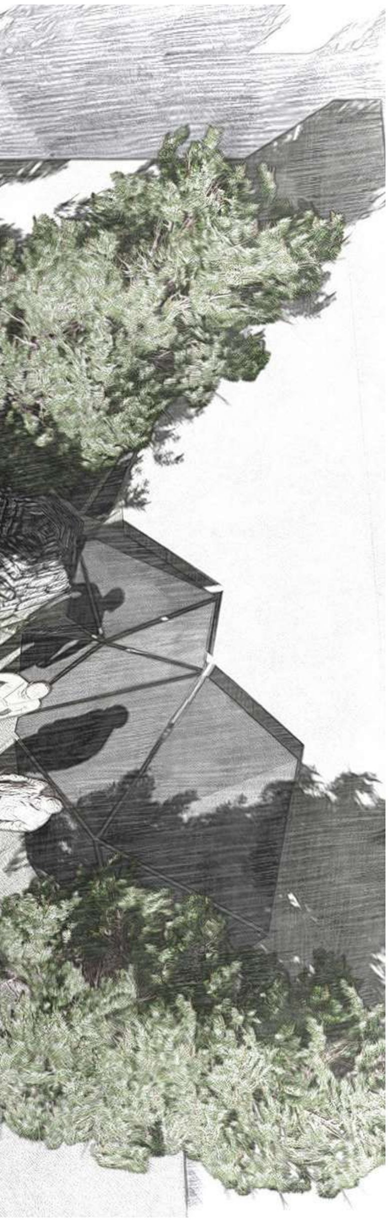
Hugo Bugg

For me garden design was the ideal career. I wanted to do something that combined art and the design world with being outside.

I love untouched natural landscapes. My favourite place is probably Dartmoor with its lovely oak uplands. I have been working on the master plan for the Royal Botanic Garden of Jordan in Amman, and I've also grown to love the native pine woodlands on limestone outcrops in the higher altitudes there. Jordan is a country that's really struggling at the moment with water shortages and the refugee crisis, and the plants and habitats are so under stress. I wanted to showcase how beautiful its native plants are, and the stunning traditional techniques and materials the people use.

I like using materials with a natural or raw finish, or that will develop a patina in a natural way. My brother, who is an interior architect and furniture maker, has introduced me to a lot of beautiful work produced by craftsmen in the UK. Travelling also keeps the mind fresh – you see different planting combinations occurring naturally and people using materials in a way you haven't tried before. For this year's garden, for example, I am using goat hair fabric, which is used by Bedouins for their tents, as a sculptural boundary.

I'm heavily influenced by the forms and shapes of contemporary landscape architecture, and wonder how I can use these ideas in smaller settings.



Hugo's essential design elements

ANDREW MUNRO WWW.THREE6T.CO.UK

1 Textured lines
A line of tall grasses follows the geometry of this modern extension in Cheshire. The lines soften and the planting changes to woodland species as you move further down the shady garden.

HUGO BUGG

2 Limestone paving
This contemporary, country garden in Dorset has been divided into three seating areas, linked by crisply cut Portuguese limestone paving, which is also used for the low walls.

CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU

3 Soft planting
For his 2014 Chelsea garden, Hugo planted characteristically soft, romantic combinations, with colour used sparingly, which he paired with strong, geometric hard landscaping.

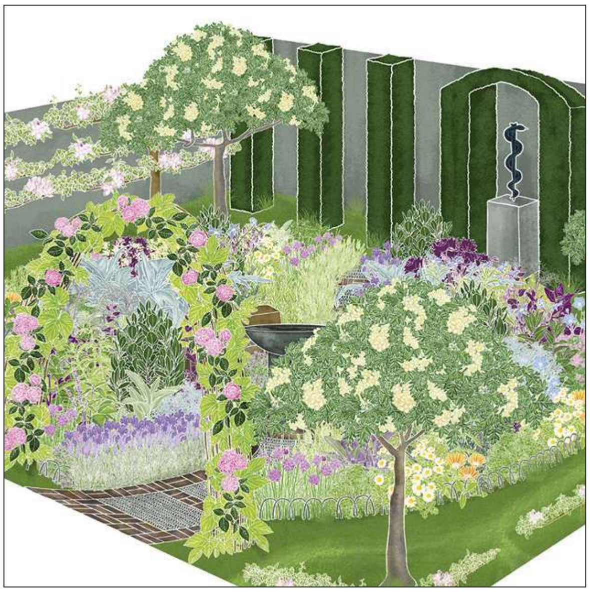
CHRIS CHRISTODOULOU

4 Geometric shapes
Hugo's first Chelsea garden, which won a gold medal, employed a strikingly contemporary and original multi-layered design, with intricate detailing for managing storm water in the garden.

Plot MA425. **Sponsor** Royal Bank of Canada. **Contractor** Hugo Bugg Landscapes. **Theme** The sacredness of water and celebration of a pine habitat in Jordan.

2016 Chelsea garden (pictured above, left)

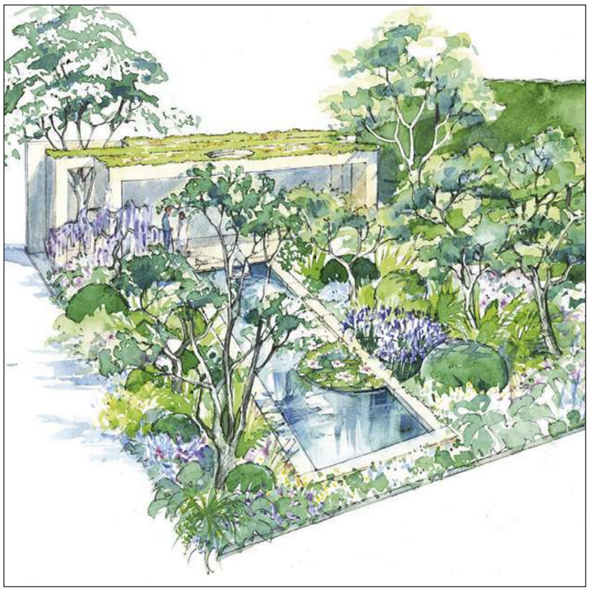
As with Hugo's 2014 garden, this design combines strong, geometric forms and shapes with richly textured planting. This time, however, the forms are bolder and the planting more unusual – hundreds of plants that thrive in the arid limestone outcrops of northwest Jordan have been grown from seed at Hortus Loci nursery and there should be many that are new to Main Avenue. *Pinus halepensis* and five black, multi-faceted stone structures create a vertical rhythm down the garden. A limestone track leads through the mixed planting of silver-leaved and architectural shrubs, tall perennials, grasses and splashes of colour from annuals, such as *Adonis annua*. It offers the chance to examine the basalt forms that employ the craft of dry stone walling in a fresh way – the stones are assembled to form crisply geometrical shapes. Depressions at the top of these structures are temporary receptacles for water, inspired by Neolithic bullaun stones in Ireland. At the centre of the garden, in a sunken terrace, stands a unique water feature that celebrates the geometry of water molecules in a perfect icosahedron, with the water held in a triangular recess at the top. The triangular motif is repeated in the black, traditional woven goat hair fabric, which is stretched on a frame to create a striking boundary. At the back of the garden a cluster of pines, with an understorey of red-stemmed *Arbutus andrachne*, creates a shady space in which to linger.
Contact 01392 927172, hugobugg.com



Jekka McVicar

Plot	RHW374.
Sponsor	St John's Hospice.
Contractor	Crocus.
Theme	A tranquil, herb-rich garden filled with plants that improve health and wellbeing.

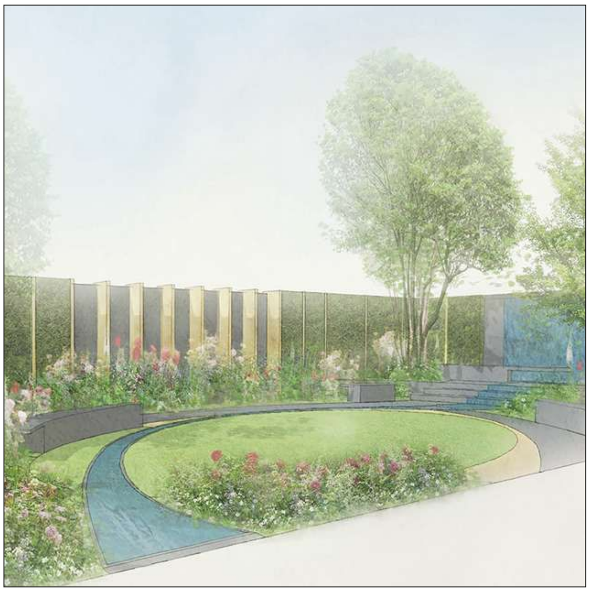
Although Jekka has already won 14 gold medals at Chelsea, this is her first time competing for a show garden award. The herb-filled garden, with its curves and circles to create a comforting layout, will be relocated to a hospice. A rusted metal arch, covered in hops and roses, leads into the heart of the large circular bed via a lavender-edged brick and cobble path where a simple stone water bowl is set in a thyme and chamomile circle. Two curved oak seats provide views across a tapestry of plants with health benefits. An apron of grass threaded with herbs, such as yarrow, salad burnet and chicory, creates a calming green foil. On the boundary wall, a bronze sculpture of the Rod of Asclepius, by Susan Bacon, is framed by clipped yew.
Contact 01454 418878, jekkasherbfarm.com



Chris Beardshaw

Plot	RHW370.
Sponsor	Morgan Stanley.
Contractor	Chris Beardshaw Ltd.
Theme	A restful, woodland-edge garden for parents and staff at a children's hospital.

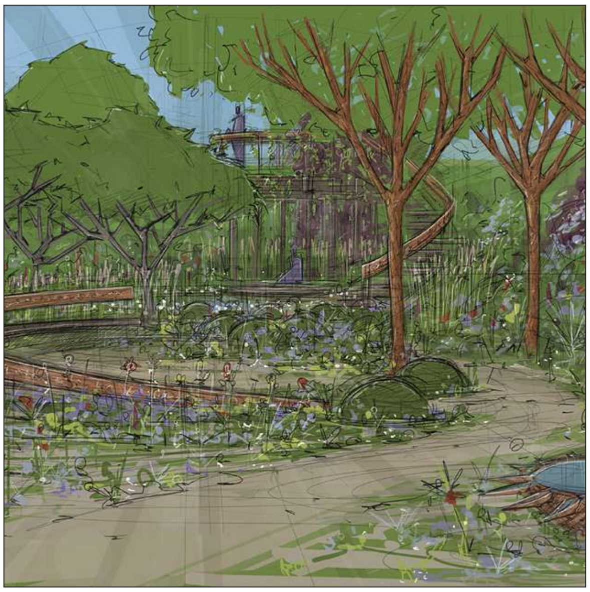
Another show garden that's been designed with healing in mind. It's unusual in that it's been conceived for a real space – a challengingly shady and overlooked flat roof in the heart of London's Great Ormond Street Hospital for Children – but will be enjoyed fleetingly at Chelsea first. At the hospital, it will be a garden to look down on and into rather than enter and so it must revel in greenery and textures, says Chris. A rectangular pool reflects the intermingling canopies of acers, *Cornus* and *Liriodendron* and extends under the Japanese-inspired contemporary pavilion where families and staff can sit and enjoy a long view into the verdant woodland. A circular hole in the green roof allows natural light to pick out a figurative sculpture by John O'Connor.
Contact 07721 450355, chrisbeardshaw.com



Jo Thompson

Plot	RHW361.
Sponsor	Qatari Diar.
Contractor	Landform.
Theme	A communal garden inspired by the heritage of the Chelsea Barracks site.

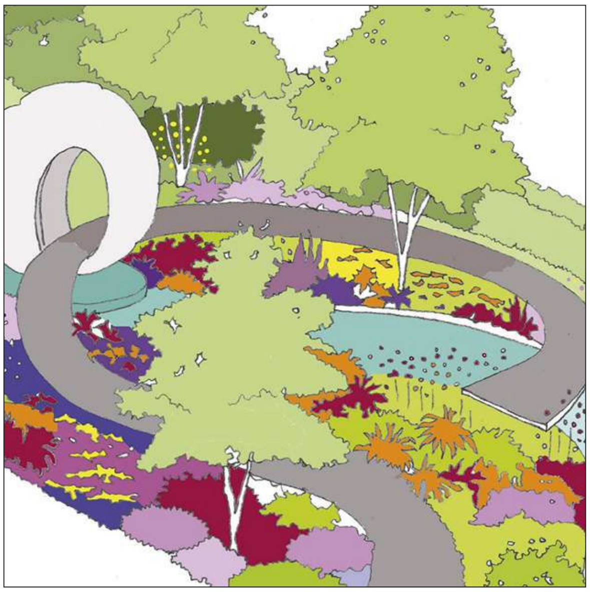
For a new show garden site that backs on to the lawn of the Royal Hospital, Jo has designed an elegant communal garden with a central grassy ellipse through which a tidal rill runs. The rill is edged in grey basaltite, which is also used for the steps leading up to the waterfall on the shady, boundary wall, and for the stone panels in the centre of the long, sunny boundary where bronze metal uprights create vertical accents along the clipped yew hedge. Bronze tones are repeated in the pleated metal benches by Gareth Neal and the sculpture by Barbara Myers. A romantic combination of pink and red roses, with perennials in shades of chocolate and purple, wraps round the garden beneath sculptural, multi-stem hornbeams.
Contact 01580 201179, jothompson-garden-design.co.uk



Nick Bailey

Plot	MA424.
Sponsor	Winton Capital.
Contractor	Gardenlink.
Theme	A flower-rich garden celebrating the beauty of mathematical equations and sequences.

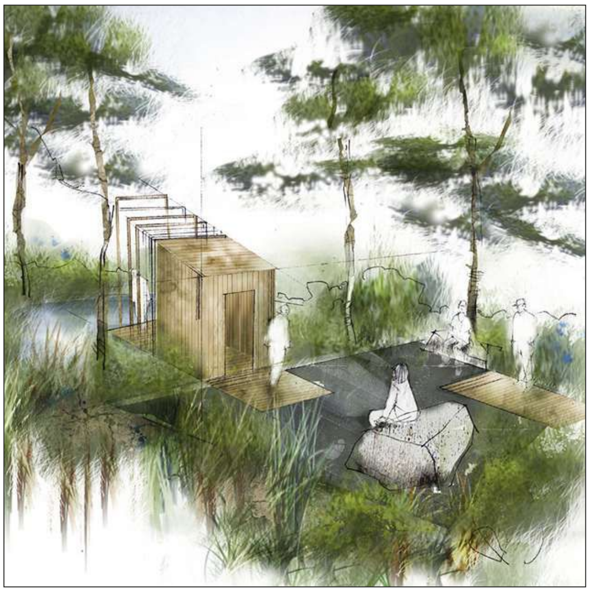
Nick's first Chelsea show garden is a multi-layered design that incorporates patterns, algorithms and sequences in its layout – the central figure-of-eight structure that sweeps up from ground level to a 3m-high belvedere, traces the infinity symbol – and in the choice of plants. But it can also be viewed as a colourful garden of southern hemisphere species, punctuated by domed *Westringia fruticosa* shrubs and with a flowing copper and oak structure that segues from bench to banister to viewing platform. At the front a copper water bowl sits in a gravelly landscape dotted with *Aloe polyphylla*. The planting becomes more lush further down the garden culminating in a curtain of cascading foliage from the top of the belvedere.
Contact 020 7349 6454. nickbailey.eu



Rosy Hardy

Plot	MA422.
Sponsor	Brewin Dolphin.
Contractor	Bowles & Wyer.
Theme	The special and threatened landscape of chalk streams such as the River Test.

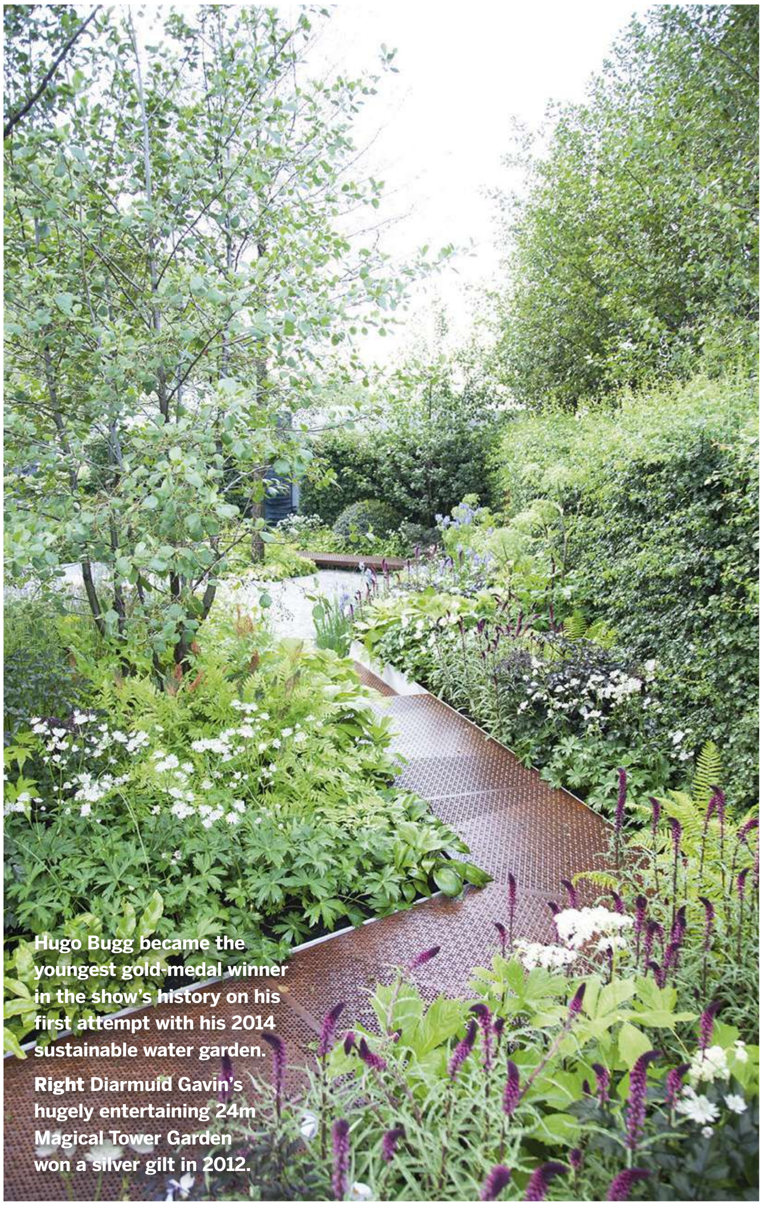
Rosy's first Chelsea show garden includes a wide range of right-plant-right-place groupings of trees, including the elegant *Alnus glutinosa* 'Imperialis', shrubs and perennials. Plant lovers will enjoy the artful combinations of old favourites with new cultivars, including repeat-flowering *Veronica* 'Mountain Breeze' and white *Cirsium rivulare* 'Frosted Magic'. The source of a chalk stream is suggested by a circular mirror pool. The stream descends via weirs to a gravelly area where the water has dried up. Flint-filled gabion stepping stones link to a serpentine raised path that floats above the water and colourful planting, and then passes through a sculptural sphere made of interconnecting ovals that suggest the planktonic skeletons that formed the chalk bedrock.
Contact 01256 896533, hardys-plants.co.uk



Sam Ovens

Plot	TR43.
Sponsor	Cloudy Bay.
Contractor	The Outdoor Room.
Theme	An unmanicured retreat that celebrates heathland and acid-loving plants.

The triangle site gives first-time Chelsea designer Sam a chance to create a garden without boundaries, which suits his theme of escape. Inspired by the ruggedness of heathland landscapes, the overall effect is of a richly textured green landscape composed of low ground-cover plants and soaring pines. Close up, pockets of orange, blue and purple from potentilla, agapanthus and heathers are revealed. Western red cedar, charred to make a dock-like jetty at the front, is used in its natural form for the entrance boardwalk and for the deck that leads into the cabin. Made from separated frames of timber, which widen and increase in height, this structure draws the eye to the landscape beyond. Here an organic-shaped pool creates a large reflective surface.
Contact 07757 591977, samovens.co.uk



Hugo Bugg became the youngest gold-medal winner in the show's history on his first attempt with his 2014 sustainable water garden.

Right Diarmuid Gavin's hugely entertaining 24m Magical Tower Garden won a silver gilt in 2012.

Going for gold

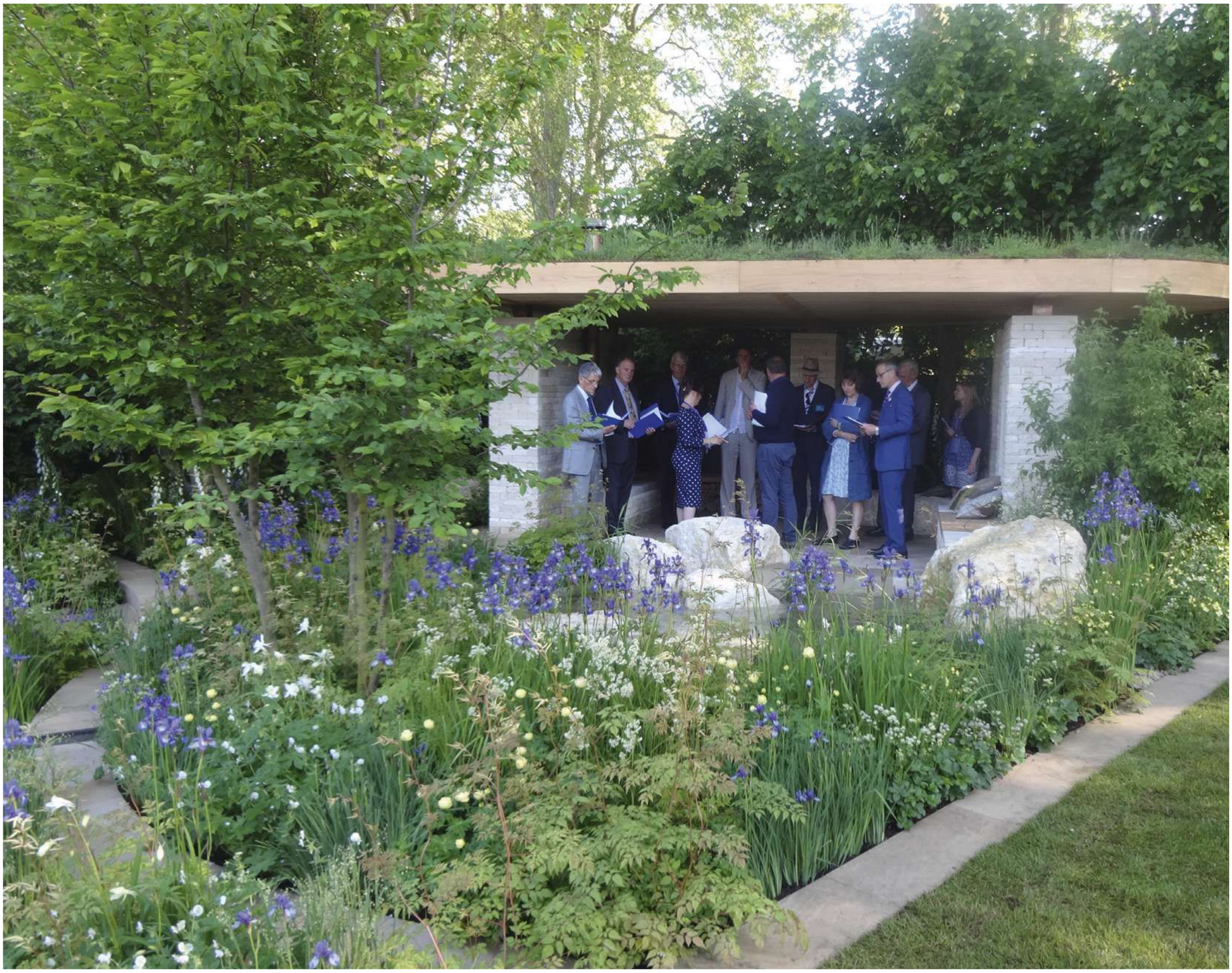
Ever wished you could be a fly on the wall as the Chelsea judges make their decisions? We take you behind the scenes to find out what really gives a garden the gold edge

WORDS ANNIE GATTI

Winning a gold medal at Chelsea, the highest accolade at the best and most famous flower show in the world, is what drives designers from the moment they submit their application to the nerve-wracking opening of the envelope on the first day of the show. What exactly does a gold represent, though, and why are the designers and sponsors so jubilant when they win one?

"It means excellence in every respect," says veteran show garden judge John Sales, who has seen the judging process undergo a sea change since his first attendance some 30 years ago. In those days, he explains, judging was done by the whole council of the RHS, who were "a mixture of gardeners, landowners and orchid growers" who would tour the gardens (after lunch), cast their votes with a show of hands, and the whole business took about an hour. Gradually, it became more rigorous: assessors were appointed who inspected the gardens before the judging, a marking schedule was drawn up and a written brief was required, to inform judges what each designer intended to create.

After rumblings from exhibitors that the system was too closed, that feedback was skimpy and unhelpful, and that there had been conflicts of interest, a revised and more transparent system was introduced in 2014. Now, judges are selected from a pool of professional designers, ▷

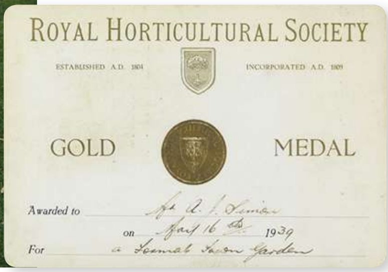


AGA BARAN / ALAMY STOCK PHOTO; RHS

Above Judges, including designer Tom Stuart-Smith (centre) and *Gardens Illustrated* editor Juliet Roberts with James Alexander-Sinclair (right, in blue), assess Adam Frost's gold medal-winning Homebase garden in 2014.

Left The People's Choice award was a popular addition to RHS Chelsea in 2003. In 2015 it went to Matt Keightley for this garden inspired by a children's centre in Lesotho.

Below A gold medal certificate dating back to 1939.



ROYAL HORTICULTURAL SOCIETY

ESTABLISHED A.D. 1804
INCORPORATED A.D. 1809

GOLD MEDAL

Awarded to Mr A. J. [illegible]
on May 16th 1939
For a Formal Town Garden

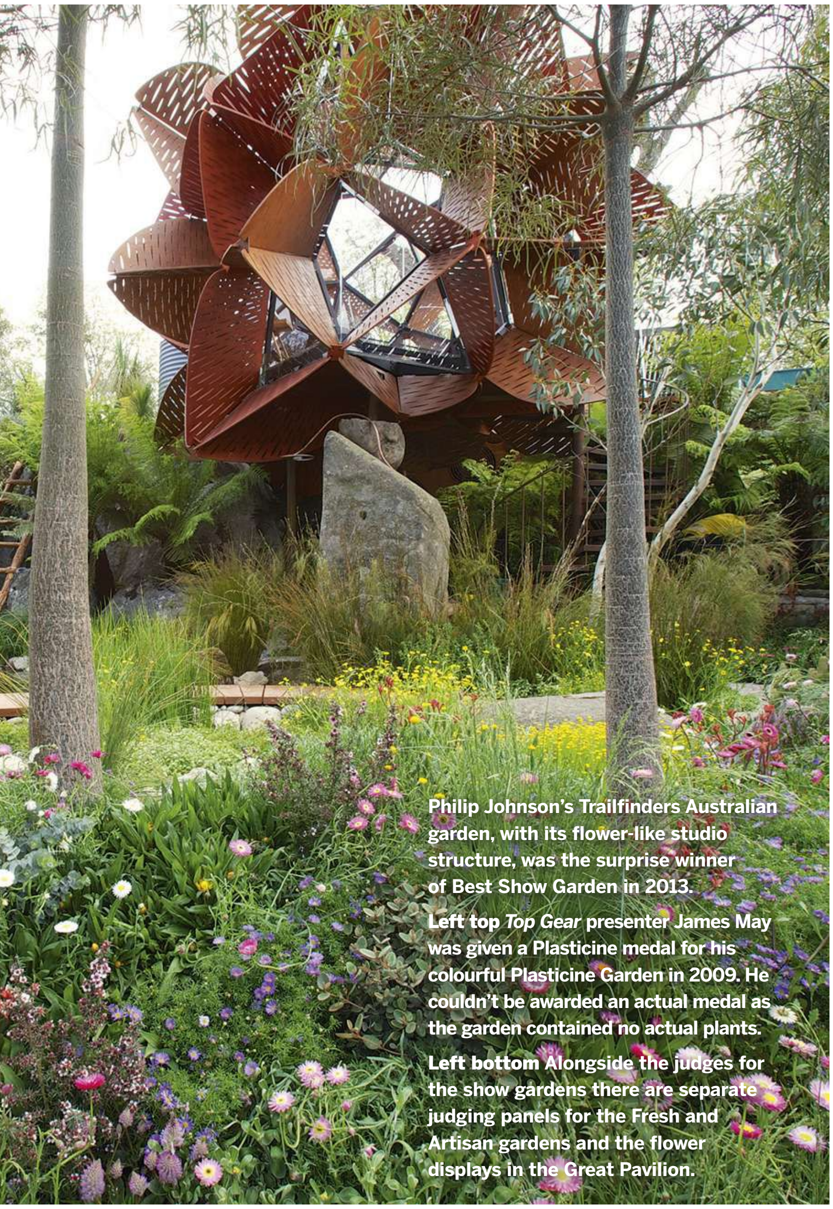
H
2
Matthewman
Sweetpea Specialist
MILLY

▷ plant specialists, landscapers, landscape architects and horticultural generalists. These are all unpaid and, importantly, must attend regular training sessions to ensure that they are up to speed with judging criteria. A maximum of two judges are included at the application stage whose remit is to scrutinise the brief and plan, and point out potential issues to the exhibitors.

Judging of the finished gardens is a three-step process. Three assessors spend at least 40 minutes on each garden on the Sunday before Chelsea week – designers get a chance to explain any changes or developments to the brief – and they mark each one according to nine clear criteria. These start with Realisation of Client's Brief, something that most visitors never see and are not aware of. Second on the list is Ambition – the judges are looking for showmanship here. Other considerations include finish and overall impression, layout of the design, spatial composition and the quality of the build. The final three criteria cover the planting – its design and composition, plant associations, and quality and density of the plants. Early on Monday morning, the assessors join the four other panel judges, who have done their own individual analysis of the gardens. All seven revisit the gardens together, share notes and vote on their proposed marks. Final decisions, which are ratified at a moderation session, are by majority. "We don't always agree and that's a good thing," says garden designer Roger Platts who is a regular judge. "It's the ones at the cusp that you have to look at very carefully, and moderation allows us to do this."

> A gold-medal garden will have garnered 28 or more out of a total of 36 points, so some golds may have more excellence than others

The cusp between silver gilt and gold must be a keenly debated one. A gold-medal garden will have garnered 28 or more out of a total of 36 points, which means that some golds may have even more excellence than others. This explains how Best Show Garden is now awarded: the gold with the highest number of points wins the coveted title. With a tie, the decision goes back to the judges. "That means you could have



Philip Johnson's Trailfinders Australian garden, with its flower-like studio structure, was the surprise winner of Best Show Garden in 2013.

Left top *Top Gear* presenter James May was given a Plasticine medal for his colourful Plasticine Garden in 2009. He couldn't be awarded an actual medal as the garden contained no actual plants.

Left bottom Alongside the judges for the show gardens there are separate judging panels for the Fresh and Artisan gardens and the flower displays in the Great Pavilion.

two pretty much perfect gardens," explains James Alexander-Sinclair, a long-standing judge and chairman of the RHS Gardens Committee. "In this instance we award Best Show Garden from the heart rather than the head." This may throw light on the controversial 2013 decision when Philip Johnson's Trailfinders Australian Garden pipped Christopher Bradley-Hole's garden for *The Telegraph*.

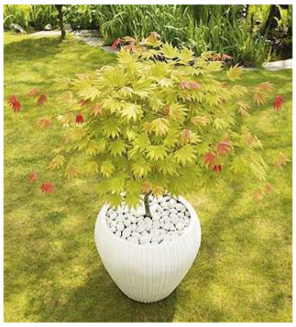
Experienced Chelsea designers working with experienced teams seem to overcome the hurdles of making a garden with ease (newcomers frequently lose marks for an over-ambitious brief, poor plant associations or using too many or too few plants) so it's doubly impressive when a Chelsea novice scoops gold first time, as Hugo Bugg did in 2014. "Often the difference between a really good show garden and a poor one is the day the plants went in," says James. "If you leave all your plants to the last moment, nothing has a chance to settle."

Since 2014 it's become easier for designers to understand where they've fallen down – they get verbal feedback and a copy of the criteria marks. This year, we can expect standards of build to be higher than ever as contractors vie for the new Best Construction Award. □

JENS HAENDELER; BLOOMBERG / GETTY IMAGES; NEIL HEPWORTH; RHS

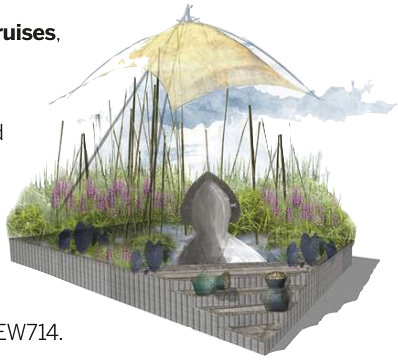
What not to miss this year

A walk-through, zingy front garden designed for the **RHS's Greening Grey Britain campaign** by Ann-Marie Powell. Topiary plants hover over meadow planting, there's a shipping container potting shed with veg on the roof, and you can see how water percolates through permeable paving. MA435.

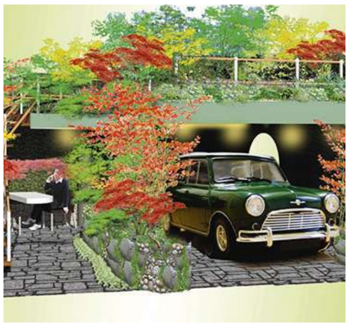


***Acer shirasawanum* Moonrise (= 'Munn 001')** on Hillier's stand, this year designed by Sarah Eberle. Its chartreuse summer foliage turns to brilliant red in autumn making it a beautiful specimen tree for a small garden. Available from hillier.co.uk GPE171.

The **Artisan garden for Viking Cruises**, also designed by Sarah Eberle, is inspired by a trip up the Mekong Delta. The fibreglass beds are filled with an eclectic mix of native grasses, vegetables and flowers for cutting. A coloured canopy handwoven by Fiona Campbell from fine wires, shades a canoe-shaped lounger by Nick Weaver. SEW714.



Chelsea debutant Daniel Bristow's quirky Garden of Potential in the Fresh category. This features the sculptural **x *Cuprocyparis leylandii***, alongside a boardwalk that morphs into a fence and oak guttering that descends from a green roof in zig-zags through the garden, creating an aerial rill. FR334.



A gardener's dream garage, complete with vintage car, forms a two-tier Artisan garden by multiple gold-medal winner Kazuyuki Ishihara. The garage is screened and overhung by trees, shrubs and flowering plants. SEW710.

Recreation of Cholmondeley Castle Gardens' **Temple Garden**, complete with millstone path, rockery, stream and unusual species of acid-loving plants. GPB125.

A sleek firepit for small spaces from Solus Décor. Shortlisted for Chelsea Product of the Year, it uses bio fuel for its warming flame. FR344.

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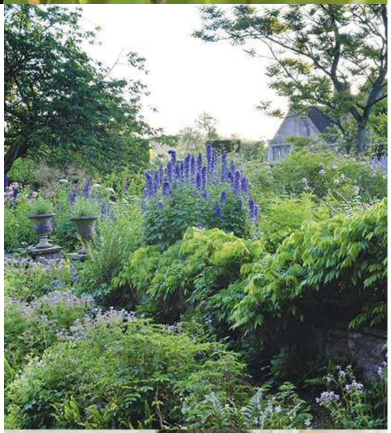

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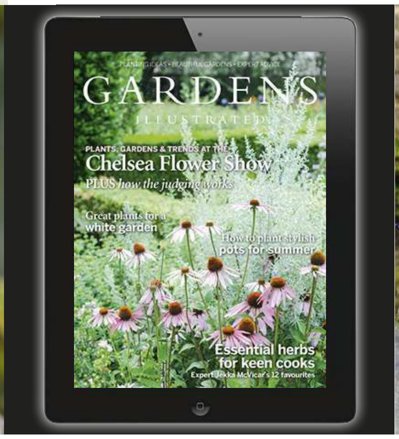
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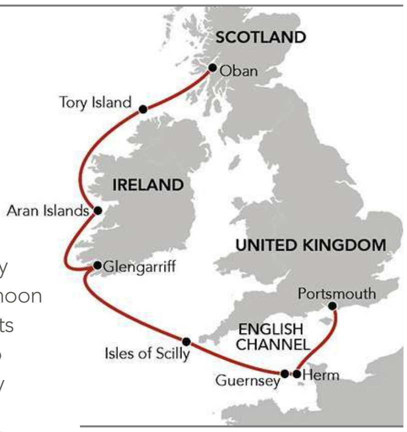
An expedition from Portsmouth to Oban aboard the Ocean Nova – 21st to 27th May 2017

Join the charming Ocean Nova in Portsmouth for this unusual springtime journey to Scotland's west coast visiting some of the most idyllic islands in Britain and Ireland. These include Tresco in the Isles of Scilly where the crystal clear water and fine white sandy beaches would not disgrace a Caribbean Island and where the famous Abbey Gardens are home to plants from over 80 countries.

We have included two island calls in Ireland. On Inishmore, the largest of the Aran Islands, we will explore some early Christian sites, whilst on Tory Island which is famous for its migratory birds we will look out for guillemots and the corncrake and also meet some of the local community. The isolation of these islands has given them an individuality and a charm which makes them very special places. The Ocean Nova is the perfect vessel for our expedition. A maximum of 84 passengers allows us to explore places otherwise inaccessible to larger ships and with our nimble Zodiac craft, we can land on out of the way coves and be footloose in a way that would be totally impractical for larger groups of passengers.

The Itinerary

Day 1 Portsmouth, United Kingdom. Embark the Ocean Nova in the late afternoon and sail.
Day 2 Guernsey & Herm, Channel Islands. Our first island call is in Guernsey, the 'Island of Flowers'. There will be the option of a walking tour of St Peter Port including a visit to Castle Cornet, a 12th century battlement which guards the entrance to St Peter Port Harbour. Alternatively enjoy a panoramic drive, see the beautiful coastline and beaches and visit the Little Chapel, built in 1914 as a miniature version of the famous basilica at Lourdes. This afternoon we make the short crossing over to Herm which at just one and a half miles long and half a mile wide, is perfect for exploring on foot.
Day 3 Tresco, Isles of Scilly. Enjoy a relaxing morning at sea as we cross to the lovely Isles of Scilly. Spend the afternoon on traffic free Tresco walking its idyllic lanes from the beach to the famous subtropical Abbey Gardens. Defying the Atlantic weather, this miracle of a garden is home to more than 20,000 species of plants from over 80 countries.
Day 4 Glengarriff, Ireland. Sail over lunch into the sheltered harbour of Glengarriff from where we will offer a choice of excursions this afternoon. Either board local boats for the crossing to Garnish Island and the beautiful Ilnacullin Gardens. The sheltered position and Gulf Stream is favourable to the growth of ornamental plants, many normally only found in subtropical or Mediterranean climates. We return by local boats sailing past 'Seal Island', the home to 250 common seals. Alternatively join the excursion to Bantry House, overlooking Bantry Bay. We will explore the house, one of the finest historic houses in Ireland along with the gardens.
Day 5 Aran Islands. After breakfast we will cruise by the magnificent Cliffs of Moher. Rising to 213 metres and over five miles long they are home to an estimated 30,000 birds including Atlantic puffin, razorbills, guillemots and choughs. A little further up the coast and some 30 miles from the Galway Coast are the Aran Islands. We will call into the largest Inishmore and explore some of the early Christian sites. Also, see the dramatic stone fort of Dun Aengus, parts of which date back some 3000 years. Late May is the perfect time to enjoy these islands as the wild flowers should be at their best.



Day 6 Tory Island. This afternoon we will arrive at Tory Island located off the northwest coast of Ireland and home to 150 or so Gaelic speakers. Although only 14 miles offshore, it feels like many more and island life here is full of traditions. Meet some of the local community in the village hall and enjoy some of their legendary storytelling, music and dance.
Day 7 Oban, Scotland. Disembark this morning.

Ocean Nova

The Ocean Nova accommodates 84 passengers in single, double and triple cabins, all with sea-view and private facilities. In your cabin you will also find a desk with chair and ample storage space for clothes and equipment. In the dining room you are treated to delicious meals in between Zodiac landings and excursions and in the panorama lounge you can enjoy a drink with a breathtaking view of the surrounding landscape. This is where the onboard specialists entertain and educate you with lectures. There is also a library onboard with panoramic views and a good selection of books.

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In brief

Name Allt-y-bela.
What Designer Arne Maynard's own garden with strong structure and colourful planting.
Where Monmouthshire.
Size Five acres.
Soil Loam and clay mix on top of clay.
Climate Sheltered, sun trap with heavy rainfall.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.

In the moment

In the third of our four-part series at Allt-y-bela, designer Arne Maynard discusses how he creates a crescendo of interesting plants for the garden in summer

WORDS **ARNE MAYNARD** PHOTOGRAPHS **JASON INGRAM**

In summer, Arne enjoys eating and entertaining outdoors. The canvas canopy provides shelter for suppers outside on long, sultry days when the hum of insects over the meadow is audible until sundown.

By the end of May, the garden completely envelops the house. Stepping out of the door you are instantly immersed in a wealth of flowers, stopping you in your tracks. Every few paces plants grab your attention and insist you halt, inspect and admire. The quality of the summer light adds to this intensity, bringing clarity and vibrancy; gone are the mists and softness of winter along with those long shadows that linger on the garden when the sun is making a lower arc across the sky. The landscape beyond our boundaries, which was such an important element of the garden in winter, is now almost irrelevant in the face of all of the activity closer to home.

It feels as if all the preparation and gardening we do throughout the year leads to this floriferous peak in summer. During winter we've been tying in and cutting back, strengthening the backbone and keeping the structure of the garden in place. Roses have been trained to wrap around domes and form arching lattice patterns on the hazel framework against the walls; pleached, espalier and step-over fruit trees have been pruned back to a few buds from the main stem; hedges and topiary clipped, so everything in winter looks crisp and neat. By the summer, all those hard lines are softened, to the point of almost disappearing under the billowing abundance of growth and flowers. We make the most of this exuberance, and many people visit the garden on group tours or to attend our courses or events in the garden theatre. I love the longer, warmer days and evenings when we can eat outside among the flowers, and the garden becomes our main living space, whether we ▷

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1 From this high vantage point under the ancient sycamore I can contemplate everything on this side of the garden, from the sweep of meadow on the common to the intensity of the garden by the house.

2 *Dactylorhiza fuchsii*, our native common spotted orchid, is gradually repopulating the meadow without any further intervention from us since we cleared the thick bramble, bracken and a dense canopy of trees that covered the area.

3 Among the ox-eye daisies is *Geranium* 'Johnson's Blue', which was given to me by a friend. Like many other geraniums, it's very much at home in a meadow. I also love the association it carries, reminding me of my friend every time I see it, which increases my enjoyment of it even more.

4 I'm trialling more and more cultivated plants in my meadows, bejewelling them with colour to create richer tapestries that for me rival herbaceous borders for beauty. The gorgeous *Iris* 'Bronze Beauty' has proved a real success – it's an extraordinary flower to find floating among the heads of the various grasses.

5 *Sanguisorba tenuifolia* f. *purpurea* a cultivar of another native meadow plant, adds a constellation of wine-red specks in the blondeness of the meadow grasses.

6 At the back of the house, the meadow is smaller and more intense, rich in ox-eye daisies and given shape by a mown curve. It's held in and framed by the cloud-pruned hawthorn hedge that separates us from the grazing cattle and the Monmouthshire countryside beyond.

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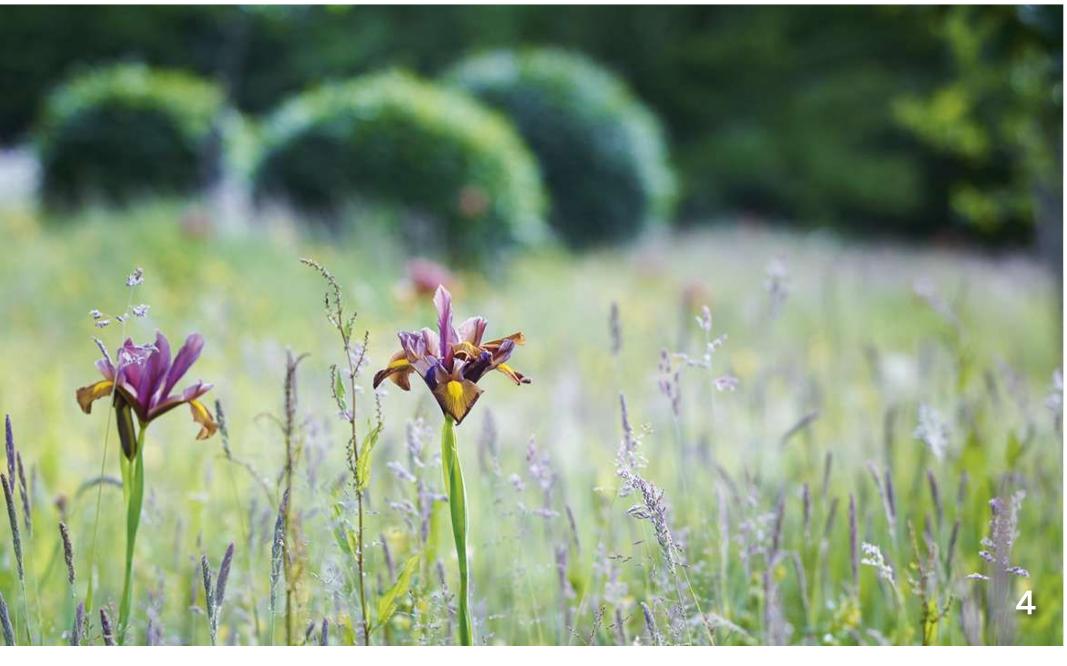
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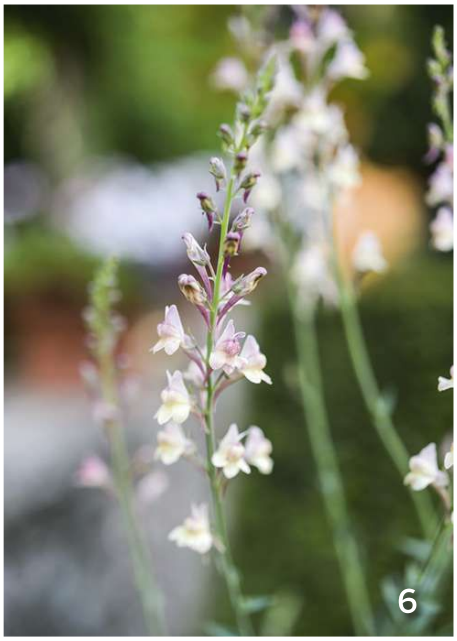

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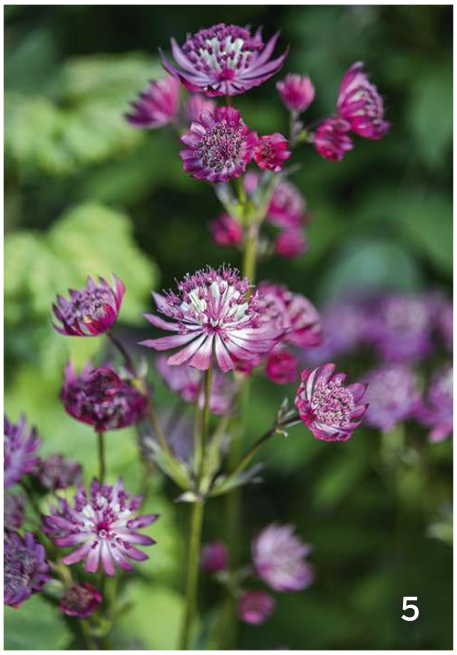

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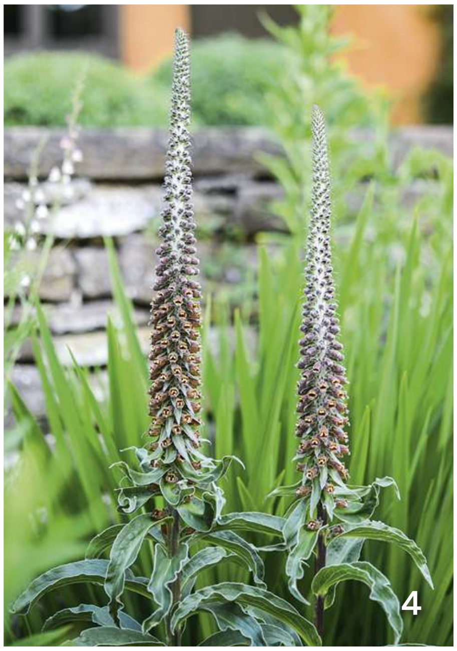

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▷ are gardening, or relaxing and entertaining. We only retire into the house at the end of the day after the sun has gone down.

While there appears to be a mass of plants at Allt-y-bela, this is in fact a carefully edited selection, far fewer than I am tempted to grow. When I moved from my previous garden at Guanock House in Lincolnshire, I made a conscious decision to limit the range of plants, concentrating on my most favourite things, among which absolutely had to be roses. Here, neither the house nor the irregular contours and boundaries of the plot lend themselves to creating formal rose gardens and double herbaceous borders in the manner that I loved when I lived at Guanock. Instead, I grow herbaceous plants in irregular criss-cross borders, or 'liberated' to grow within the meadows, and I had to look at other ways to place roses, often growing them in wilder situations. Although I train some of the roses, such as *Rosa* 'William Lobb' and *R.* 'Königin von Dänemark', as I did before – on hazel domes within beds of herbaceous perennials – I've also planted lots of shrub roses in the wild grass and the large-flowered, creamy, Noisette rose, *R.* 'Madame Alfred Carrière', clambering up through trees and hedgerows. Last year, these more cultivated roses really started to get going and it looked amazing to see the big blowsy flowers tumbling in the manner of wild roses, out of hazels. It was as though there had been a garden here in the past, now abandoned, and was reverting back to the untamed. These big roses on the fringes of the garden give it a great feeling of exuberance and lushness. In the ▷

1 In the courtyard beside the house the extraordinary colour of my favourite rose, *Rosa* 'Cardinal de Richelieu', is intensified by simple repetition and by avoiding anything that will cause a distraction. The rose is complemented by just the green of the clipped box and yew, and the subtle spires of the *Digitalis parviflora* 'Milk Chocolate'.

2 By the stream, the green-eyed white shrub rose *R.* 'Madame Hardy' is clean and crisp and has a simplicity that cleanses the palette after the intensity of the rich purple *R.* 'Cardinal de Richelieu' in the courtyard.

3 *R.* 'Cardinal de Richelieu' is not the strongest of roses, so it works best when trained on a hazel dome. This way, the heavy heads are supported at an easy level for the eye, and the glorious flowers can make maximum impact up close as well as from afar.

4 *Digitalis parviflora* 'Milk Chocolate' is a rare species foxglove originating from Spain. It grows both within and beyond the courtyard wall, providing a subtle continuity with its spires of the most intriguing reddish-brown.

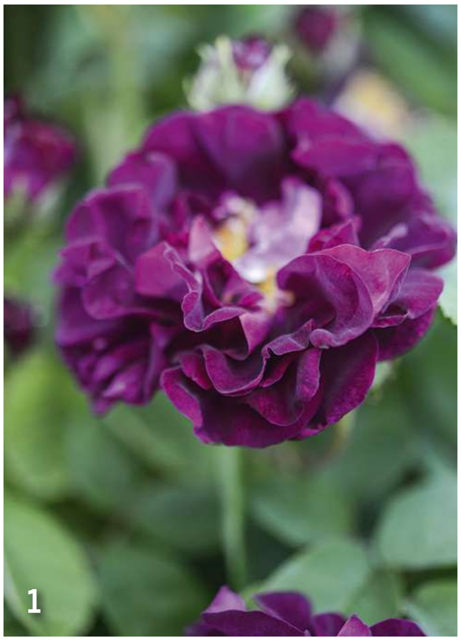
5 What started as *Astrantia major* 'Claret', one of the darkest red astrantias, has seeded itself around and the resultant plants are a pleasing mix with seedling variation. They cannot be relied on to come true from seed, so if you want to keep a pure strain, remove the flower heads before they seed.

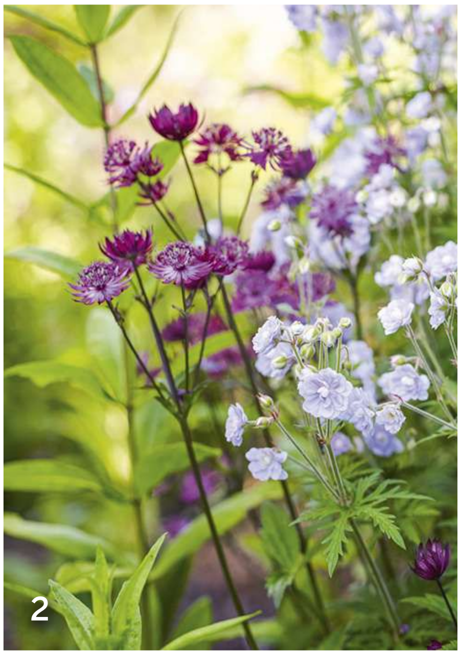
6 The delicate mix of colours within the flower of *Linaria* 'Peachy' makes it a wonderful transitional plant that has the canny ability to unite other colours as it does here, bringing together the soft earthiness of the foxglove and the cleaner vibrancy of the *R.* 'Cardinal de Richelieu'.

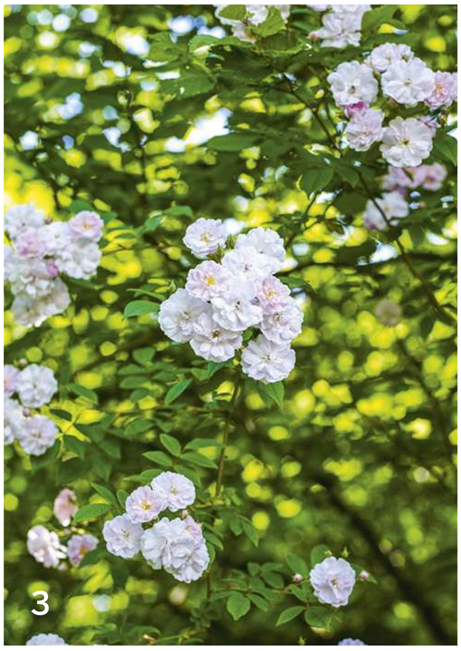
▷ bigger trees we grow the more vigorous ramblers, such as *Rosa* 'Kiftsgate', *R.* 'Bobbie James' and *R.* 'Mannington Mauve Rambler', all left unpruned to roam at will. This is how we achieve our real volume of roses – they tumble from the alders all along the river, where blooms dangle down and seem to float above the water. I'm hoping that eventually the whole garden in June will be an amazing froth of roses, the air thick with the rich scent from the proliferation of flowers, an almost overwhelming headiness of blooms in a relatively small space.

What I describe with the roses is true of many other elements in the garden, too. It is starting to get a sense of maturity, but there is still some way to go before my vision is fully realised. In the early days, we invested a lot of time clearing and pruning back, laying the hedgerows and planting new trees. Those are the structural mainstays that shape the garden. Within them are the more ephemeral plants, those things that give the summer garden its identity. This part of the garden will never be finished. Of course we enjoy the moment, but evolution is inevitable and to be welcomed. It's the most exciting and dynamic thing about gardening – there is constant room for improvement, chances to create new combinations and to discover new plants. Summer is the most wonderful time to think about all of this. I'm planning now for next year, a notebook always to hand to jot down ideas before the flowers fade and the moment is forgotten. □

• Find out more about Arne's work and details of his courses at **arnemaynard.com**
Look out for the final instalment in the series in our August 2016 issue.







1 The gallica *Rosa* 'Tuscany Superb' is sometimes known as the 'old velvet rose' and lives up to its name well. It's one that I train on to a hazel dome structure, which keeps it neatly in place in the border.

2 *Astrantia major* 'Claret' and *Geranium pratense* Summer Skies (= 'Gernic') are both fine forms of common cottage garden plants, which make up the blowsy mix of herbaceous perennials in this border.

3 Roses grow through almost all of the trees along the drive and stream's edge, and add a huge volume of flower and scent to the garden. The rambler *R.* 'Paul's Himalayan Musk' flowers with great grace on long trailing stems.

4 A lattice of cobble paths run through the area above the drive, which I call my cottage garden. The paths give access through the billowing mass of flowers and fruit, and allow for the tending of this border, where every inch of soil is brimming with plants.

5 The strong, clear pink of climbing *Rosa* Sir Paul Smith (='Beapaul') brings a vitality to the softer tones of the roses behind. The stems are tied on to wooden pegs that we've inserted into the dry stone wall. Training them down the wall, which slows the sap, produces the most incredible flowering for months on end.

6 I grow *Rosa* 'Cécile Brünner' as a natural shrub rather than training it on a dome. Its arching stems sometimes root themselves where they touch the ground, providing extra rose plants with no effort required.

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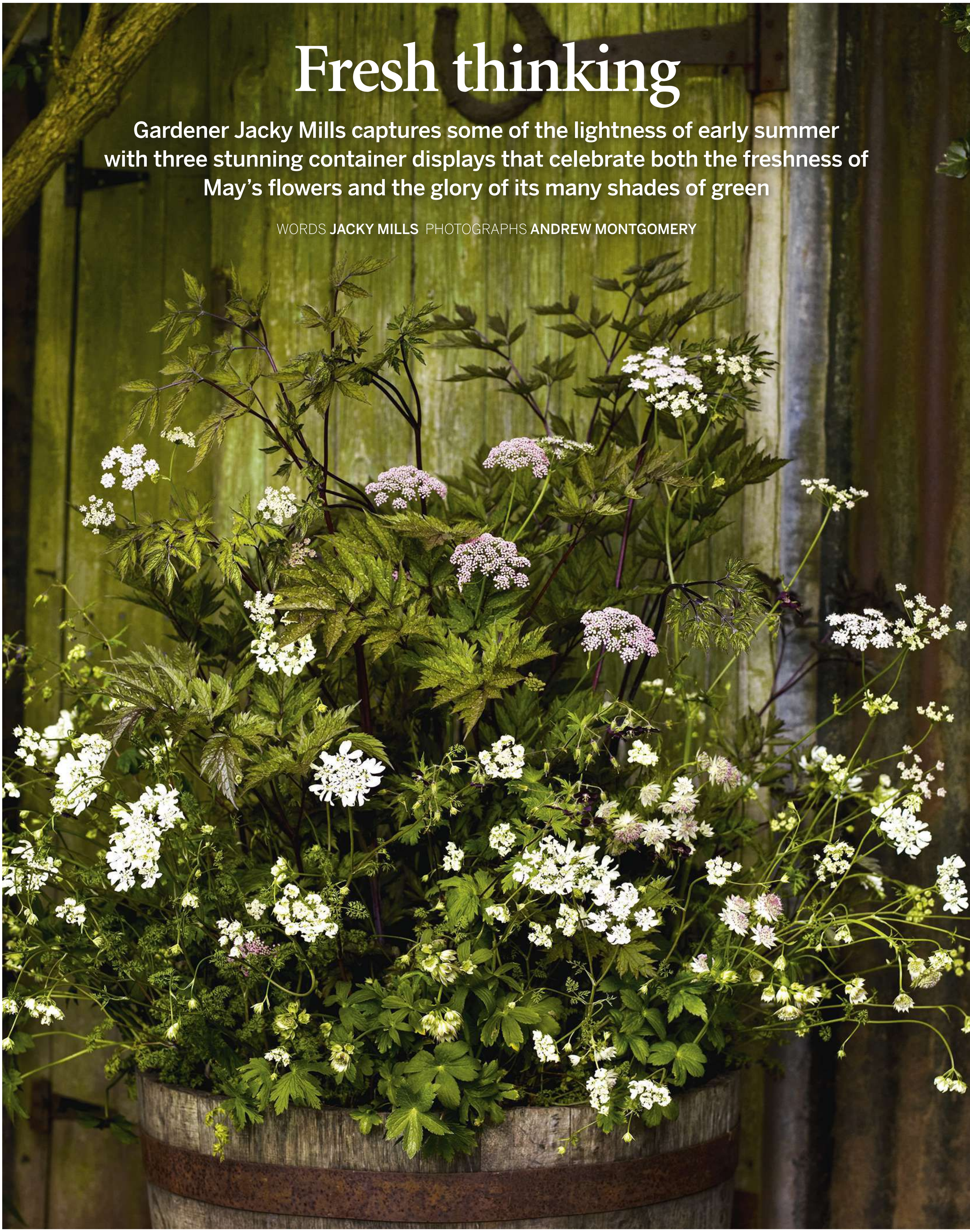
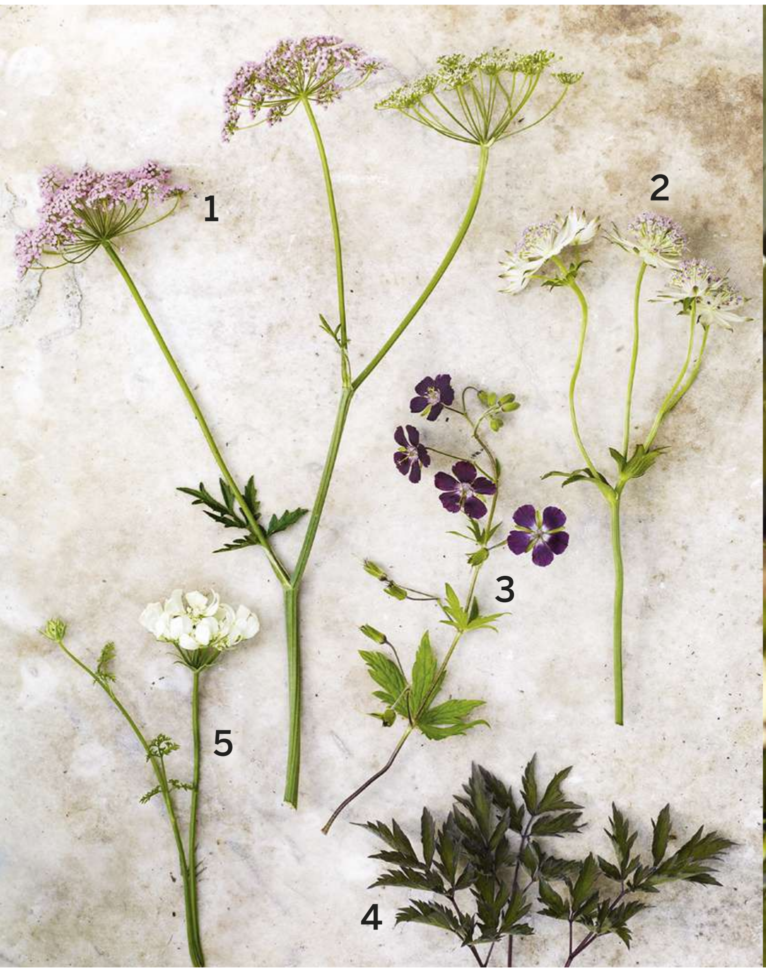
Fresh thinking

Gardener Jacky Mills captures some of the lightness of early summer with three stunning container displays that celebrate both the freshness of May's flowers and the glory of its many shades of green

WORDS **JACKY MILLS** PHOTOGRAPHS **ANDREW MONTGOMERY**





Smouldering pinks

At this time of year the lanes around our house in the Welsh Marches are awash with froths of cow parsley, flecked with pink from red campion and ragged robin. Lines of hawthorn hedge, smothered in creamy-white flowers, are frequently interrupted by majestic copper beeches, rising up resplendent in their distinctive purple foliage. I chose a dark-leaved form of *Actaea simplex* for the foundation of this pink-and-white arrangement. Set in an old oak half-barrel from our local cider maker, it is a perfect celebration of the Herefordshire countryside.

How to achieve the look

Container

Half barrels make great containers, but scale of planting is the key to success. A minimum pot to plant height ratio of 1:1.5 is preferable. The oak of this barrel has aged to a beautiful silvery-grey enriched by the rusted iron bands holding it together. The muted colours will enhance any planting scheme. I keep a permanent collection of large shrubs in aged oak barrels at home as they allow sufficient soil for a long-term planting and require less watering. Ensure good drainage by placing crocks over holes drilled through the base. I used John Innes No.2 compost incorporating plenty of leaf mould as these perennials prefer a humus-rich soil positioned in partial shade.

Cultivation and care

In late summer the *Actaea* will produce tall, narrow plumes of pink buds opening to white flowers. These are followed by lime-green seed pods. The pale greenish-pink pincushions of the *Astrantia* 'Buckland' make it an excellent cut flower, as do the scented pink umbels of the *Pimpinella* and the creamy-white flowers of *Orlaya grandiflora.* This self-seeding annual can be sown in autumn and spring, to produce a constant supply of flowers. For contrast I've added a dark form of *Geranium phaeum* with inky-purple flowers, similar to *G. phaeum* 'Raven'. Reduce its tendency to self-seed and encourage repeat blooms by cutting back after flowering.

Plants (see above left)

1 *Pimpinella major* 'Rosea'
Non-spreading, herbaceous umbellifier. 90cm. USDA 5a-8b†. Flowers May to July.

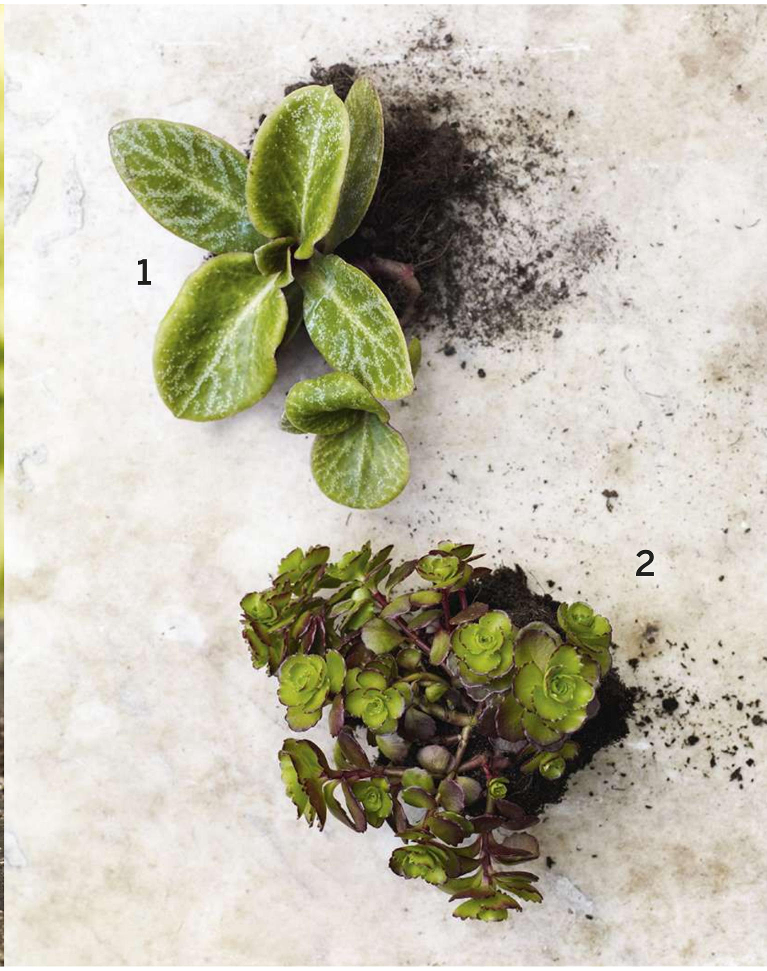
2 *Astrantia* 'Buckland'
An exceptionally free-flowering sterile hybrid so won't self seed everywhere. 60cm. USDA 5a-9b. May to August.

3 *Geranium phaeum*
A herbaceous perennial that is tolerant of a range of conditions including deep, dry shade. 60cm. USDA 5a-7b. May to July.

4 *Actaea simplex* (Atropurpurea Group) 'Brunette'
A tall, hardy, herbaceous perennial with dark-purple, serrated foliage. In late summer it produces bottle-brush spikes of scented flowers. 1.5m. AGM*. USDA 3a-8a. August to October.

5 *Orlaya grandiflora*
A hardy annual with ferny foliage and delicate, scabious-like, white flowers. 60cm. May to October.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



Succulent deception

I found this lovely wooden box hidden in my parents' coal shed. Complete with rusted handle and slatted base it made an ideal container for the succulents I'd bought on impulse at a plant fair. The fleshy, two-toned leaves of the *Crassula streyi* had caught my eye and I thought they would combine well with sedums. After finding out they actually grow on shady, rocky ledges in South Africa, I teamed them with creeping mats of a stonecrop that can tolerate dappled shade.

How to achieve the look

Container

Succulents look great in containers, from traditional stone troughs to contemporary living walls. This box is perfect for those requiring a well-drained soil. I lined the base with hessian to contain the compost, then added a layer of gravel followed by John Innes No.1 compost mixed with plenty of sharp grit and top-dressed with more gravel. The predominantly green rosettes of the stone crop are delicately edged in red and will eventually spill over the sides. In summer they will produce tufted red flowers to complement the wonderful carmine of the crassula leaves, whose red underside is an adaption to gather light. They can grow in full sun but the leaves will be paler and less vigorous.

Cultivation and care

The joy of experimenting with plant combinations in containers is that they can be moved to different conditions if they are not thriving. Most sedums, unlike the crassula, like full sun and will happily colonise in well-drained soil in paving, walls and gravel gardens. *Sedum spurium* 'Fuldaglut' is one that will tolerate some dappled shade, as will cultivars such as the dark-leaved 'Voodoo'. *Crassula streyi* is not widely available and needs protection from frost. Alternatively, try *Crassula ovata* 'Undulata', which has wavy, fleshy green leaves, or one of the many sempervivums, which have similar colours and like a sunny, well-drained spot. All are members of *Crassulaceae* family.

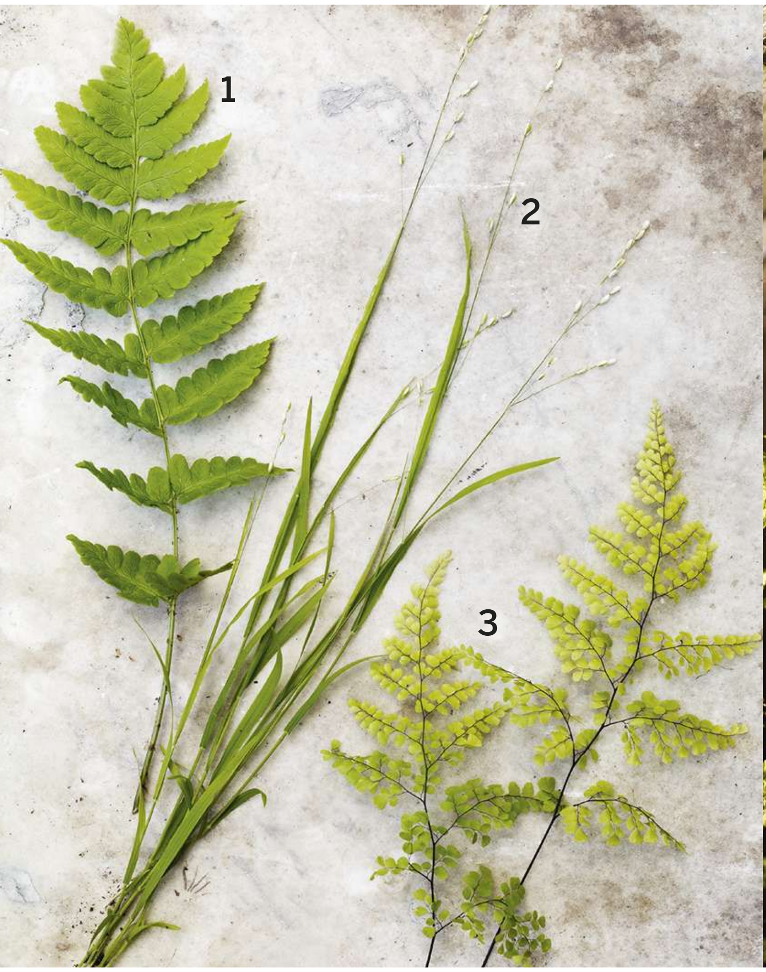
Plants (see above)

1 *Crassula streyi*

A tender, evergreen succulent with fleshy leaves and sprays of tiny white flowers at the end of winter. 15-35cm. USDA 10b-11.

2 *Sedum spurium* 'Fuldaglut'

Deciduous and shade tolerant, this hardy succulent makes excellent ground cover and its late-summer flowers are loved by bees. 15cm. USDA 4a-9b.



Shimmering chartreuse

The intense green known as chartreuse, because of its resemblance to the French liqueur, is one of a dozen or more distinct green hues appearing in the landscape at this time of year. It's the colour of *Melica altissima* 'Alba', one of my favourite grasses. Its fresh, green, gently arching foliage is topped with white flowers resembling floating pearls of arborio rice. It is impossible not to want to run your hands through it as you pass.

How to achieve the look

Container

Raising this chunky, square, stone urn on to a pedestal gave it immediate gravitas, and the simple planting scheme completely transformed the dark, neglected greenhouse. The grass was teamed with several lacy maidenhair ferns and the young fronds of a single Clinton's wood fern, which provided a perfect colour match. If more structure is required, *Melica* combines well with many perennials. Try it with the white-flowered form of *Geranium robertianum* or the rich purple *Geranium phaeum* 'Rothbury Ruby'. For a greater contrast, use the narrow-leaved *Hosta lancifolia* or a *Polygonatum* hybrid. This arrangement would also look at home in a modern Terrazzo planter.

Cultivation and care

Using a loam-based compost and well-rotted leaf mould, this combination copes with full or partial shade. As *Melica altissima* is a deciduous perennial grass, cut the foliage back in late February to tidy the plants up. Although a prolific self-seeder, unwanted seedlings are easily removed when young. The two ferns require moist but well-drained soil. In drier situations, try the common *Polypodium vulgare* instead of the sturdy fronds of *Dryopteris clintoniana*. *Adiantum venustum* spreads by creeping rhizomes, so can be propagated by division. Cutting back the old fronds in late February will reveal the new copper-coloured ones unfurling before they turn a lush, spring green.

Plants (see above left)

1 *Dryopteris clintoniana*
A semi-evergreen hybrid fern, with broad pinnate fronds. 75-90cm.
2 *Melica altissima* 'Alba'
Deciduous, ornamental perennial grass. 40-50cm. April to October.
3 *Adiantum venustum*
A good ground-cover plant for a woodland garden. 15-30cm. AGM.

Suppliers

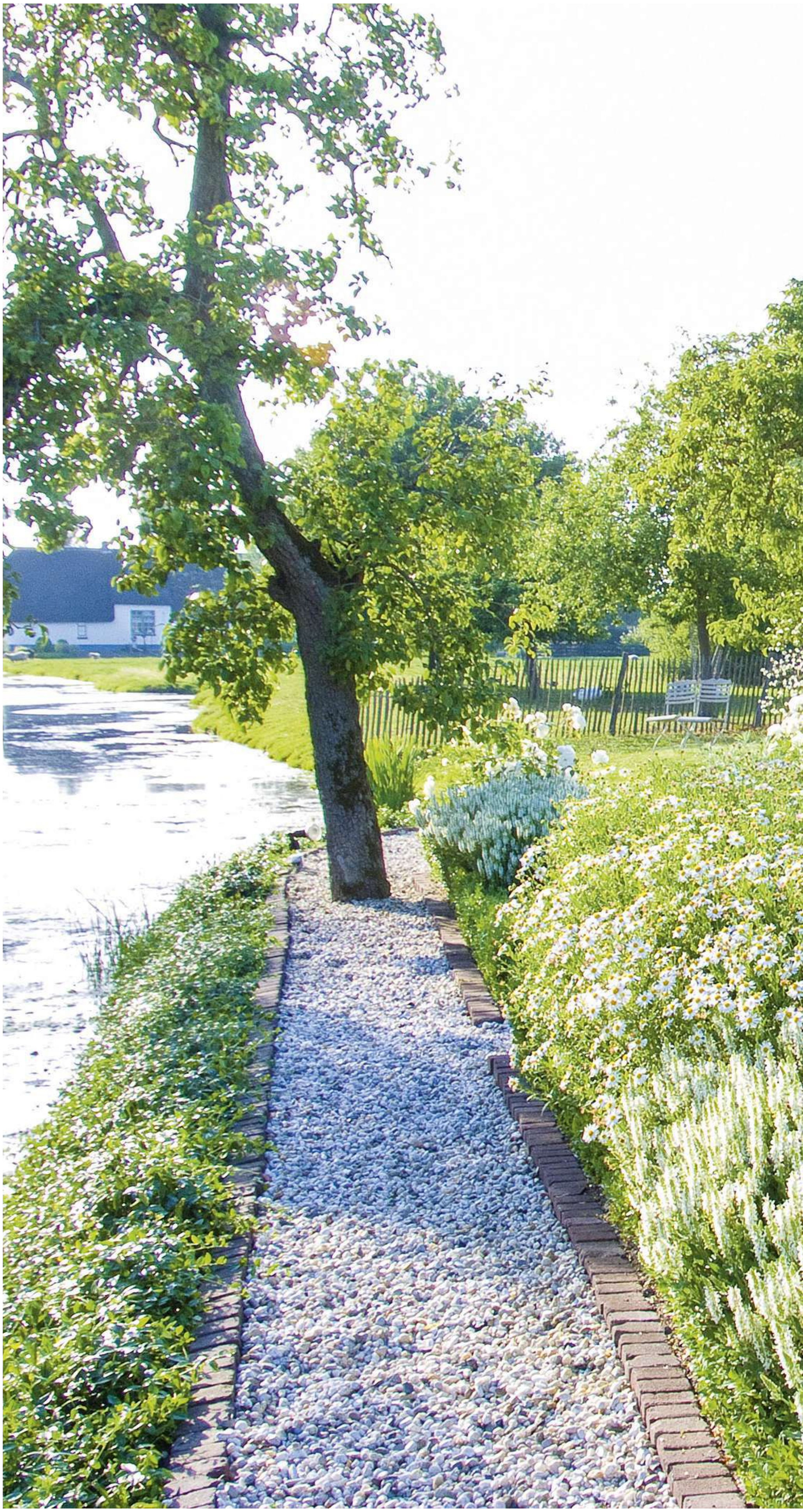
- **Cotswold Garden Flowers**
  Tel 01386 422829, cgf.net
- **Fibrex Nurseries**
  Tel 01789 720788, fibrex.co.uk
- **Higgledy Garden**
  higgledygarden.com
- **Long Acre Plants**
  Tel 01063 32802, plantsforshade.co.uk
- **The Plantsman's Preference**
  Tel 01379 710810, plantpref.co.uk
- **Special Plants**
  Tel 01225 891686, specialplants.net

Like much of the Netherlands, the landscape around the small town of Harmelen is defined by a network of long, straight roads crossed at right angles by the country's famous canals. On the outskirts of the town, this formality is heightened by the regularly spaced pollarded willows that line the canals. A few farms are dotted about and sheep graze the lush fields. It is in this austere setting that the garden of Klazina van Kippersluis erupts in a froth of white flowers. "Although we are out of the way," says Klazina, "it is such an improbable sight that people often walk by and pause to enjoy the garden."

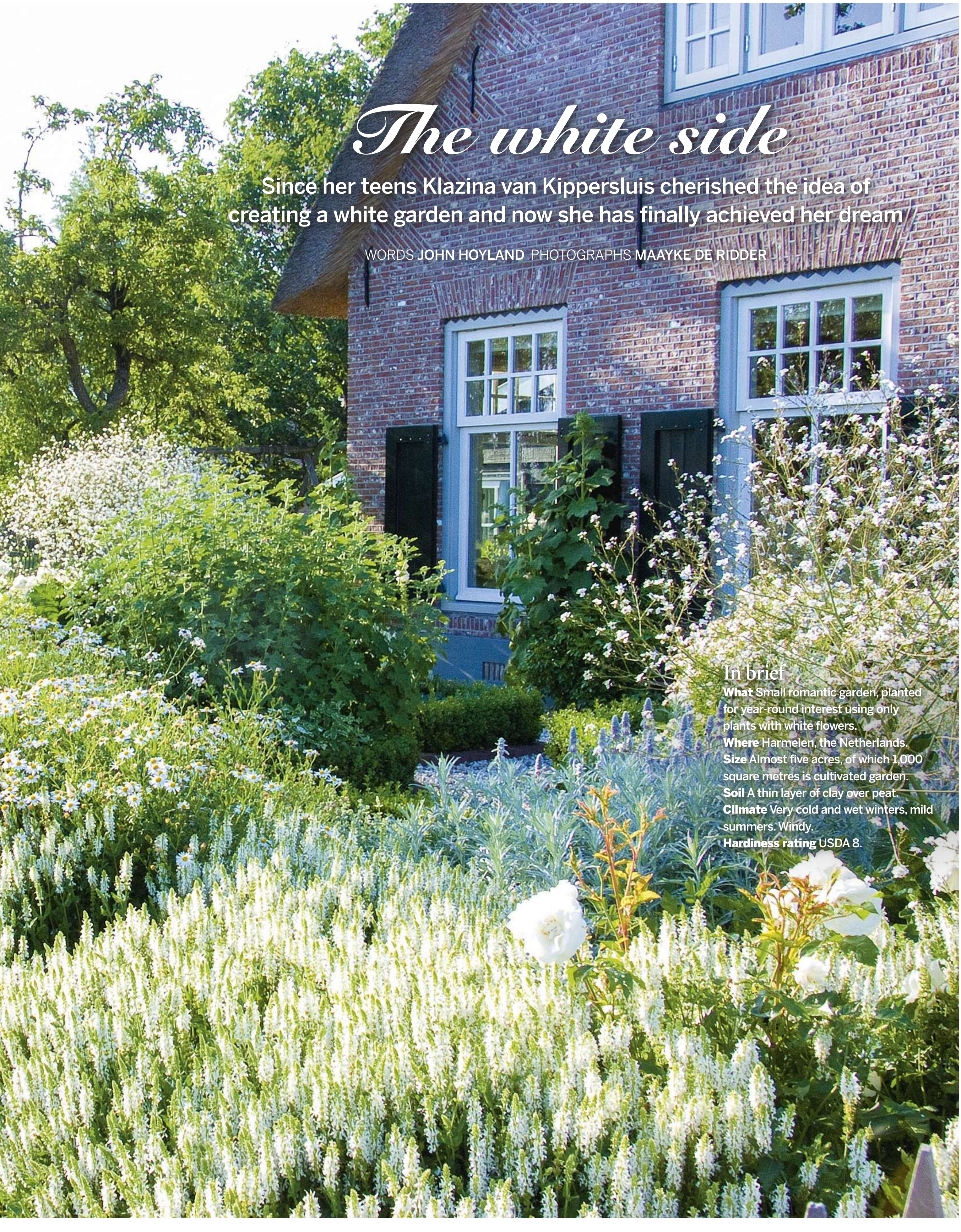
Klazina and her husband bought the dilapidated former farm that stands on the edge of a canal in 2006. There was no garden apart from a collection of pear trees, and the house needed rebuilding. Worst of all, the place was damp. "If you left your shoes on the floor at night, the next day there would be mould growing on them." The first job they undertook was to rebuild the house, in the local style using reclaimed materials, and then to raise the ground 30cm above the level of the canal so that the garden she planned would not be constantly boggy.

When, in 2009, it came time to make the garden, Klazina knew exactly what she wanted to do. As an 18-year-old studying landscape management, she had visited Britain and while many of the gardens she saw were splendid, it was Sissinghurst Castle in Kent that made a lasting impression. "It overwhelmed me, particularly the white garden. I saw for the first time that you could have a garden of a single colour," she says. "And also the importance of containing plants within an ordered design."

Klazina has sited her garden in the area between the house and a canal. "I researched old gardens in the area and found that it was common to have a garden in front of the house so that everyone could see it and enjoy it." She began by laying out a grid of narrow gravel paths, edged in brick bordered by low clipped box hedges. "I wanted a formality that would ▷



Inspired by Vita Sackville-West's White Garden at Sissinghurst Castle, Klazina van Kippersluis has created a fabulous white garden at the front of her canalside house. An attractive, low-lying mound of *Salvia x sylvestris* 'Schneehügel' and *Kalimeris incisa* 'Alba' is topped with frothy clouds of *Crambe cordifolia*.



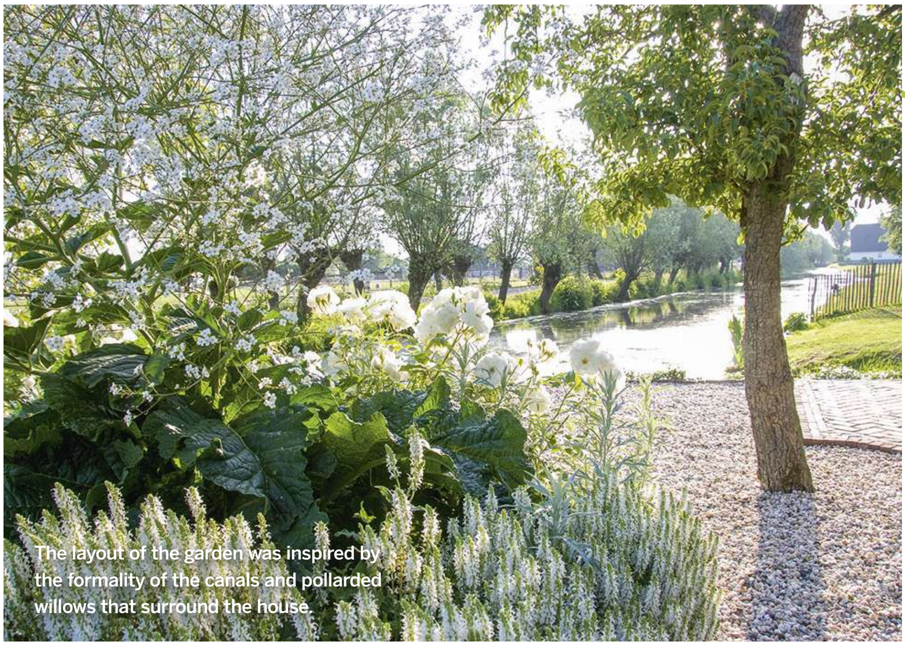
The white side

Since her teens Klazina van Kippersluis cherished the idea of creating a white garden and now she has finally achieved her dream

WORDS **JOHN HOYLAND** PHOTOGRAPHS **MAAYKE DE RIDDER**

In brief

What Small romantic garden, planted for year-round interest using only plants with white flowers.
Where Harmelen, the Netherlands.
Size Almost five acres, of which 1,000 square metres is cultivated garden.
Soil A thin layer of clay over peat.
Climate Very cold and wet winters, mild summers. Windy.
Hardiness rating USDA 8.



The layout of the garden was inspired by the formality of the canals and pollarded willows that surround the house.

In June the garden resembles a great frothy, effervescent bouquet with clouds of Crambe cordifolia *and spires of foxgloves and hollyhocks*

▷ echo the beautiful landscape that surrounds us and match the architecture of the house," she explains. There was never any doubt in Klazina's mind that she would follow the inspiration Sissinghurst Castle's White Garden had provided. "I think a white garden is magical, especially in the morning and again when the light starts to fades in the early evening."

Klazina emphasises that making a single-colour garden is difficult. "When you leave colour out, structure and texture is everything." She studies the differences in flower and leaf shape, the texture of the foliage and the shades of green on stem and leaf. When she is deciding which plants will combine well, she picks flowers and analyses how they will look together. "As a small child at my family's farm shop I would pick bunches of flowers to sell. Looking closely at bouquets of flowers is a really good way to learn which plants go well together."

In June the garden does indeed resemble a great frothy, effervescent bouquet with clouds of *Crambe cordifolia*, spires of foxgloves and hollyhocks punctuated by compact clusters of *Rosa* Iceberg (= 'Korbin'). Klazina has planted large groups of *Salvia* x *sylvestris* 'Schneehügel' as a skirt around the crambe. Its flowers continue until the end of summer and help to hide the crambe's coarse foliage. Around the salvia are domes of *Kalimeris incisa* 'Alba', which has masses of delicate, daisy-like flowers throughout the summer.

Although the garden is at its height in early summer, Klazina has designed it to be attractive all through the year. In the winter the sharp lines of the box are punctuated by domes of *Choisya ternata* underplanted with the prostrate *Vinca minor* f. *alba*. On warm, still days in the spring the garden is perfumed by *Narcissus* 'Thalia', and later *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* 'Alba' bobs among *Tulipa* 'Spring Green' and *Tulipa* 'White Triumphator'.

At the rear of her house Klazina has a fruit and vegetable garden, a cuttings garden and a woodland area planted with snowdrops and trilliums. But it is the white garden that she loves the most. "White gives me peace, a good contrast to our hectic lives. I think I will need to have the beauty of a white garden all my life." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

The garden is open by appointment only. For details contact Klazina via email: t.winkelmeisje@gmail.com

9 of Klazina's favourite plants

1 *Alcea rosea*
A white-flowered form of the common hollyhock is allowed to seed into the gravel paths. A biennial that is best grown as an annual. 1.25m. RHS H5, USDA 3a-9b†.

2 *Choisya ternata*
An evergreen shrub with glossy foliage that forms a neat dome. In late spring the entire plant is smothered with sprays of scented, star-shaped flowers. 2.5m. RHS H4, USDA 7a-9b.

3 *Crambe cordifolia*
Provides a cloud of tiny white flowers that floats over the garden in June. A member of the cabbage family, the foliage is coarse but can be cut back after flowering. 2.5m. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

4 *Digitalis purpurea* f. *albiflora*
The white form of the common foxglove adds height to the planting scheme. Occasional purple-flowered plants are removed. 1.2m. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

5 *Rosa* Iceberg (= 'Korbin')
A shrub or climbing floribunda-type rose with large clusters of lightly scented pure-white flowers. Flowers June to September. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-9a.

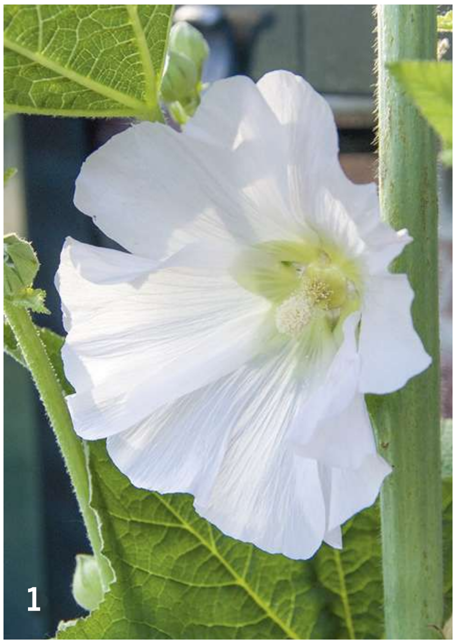
6 *Kalimeris incisa* 'Alba'
Mounds of finely cut foliage are smothered in small, aster-like flowers from June to September. Tolerant of most soils, but prefers full sun. 50cm.

7 *Stachys byzantina*
The silver-grey, velvety foliage makes a dense ground cover around the shrubs and perennials, helping to smother weeds while looking attractive all year long. 40cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-10b.

8 *Lamprocapnos spectabilis* 'Alba'
Formerly known as *Dicentra*, this is one of the earliest perennials to flower. The arching stems appear to bend over with the weight of the heart-shaped flowers. 60cm. RHS H7, USDA 2a-9b.

9 *Salvia* x *sylvestris* 'Schneehügel'
A long-flowering perennial with grey-green foliage and short spikes of white flowers. The foliage is slightly scented and the flowers attract bees and butterflies. 45cm. RHS H7, USDA 4a-9b.

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available.



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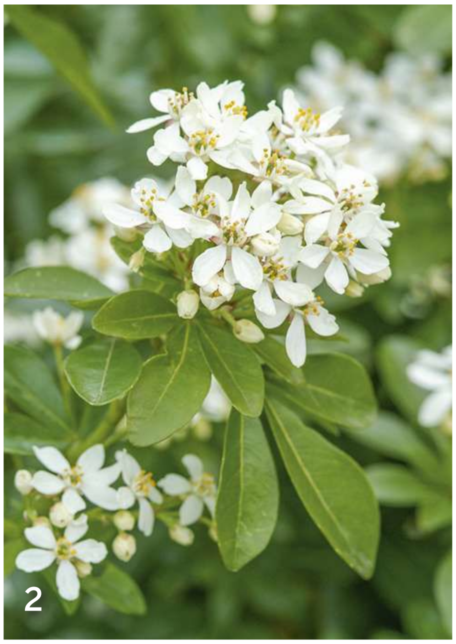

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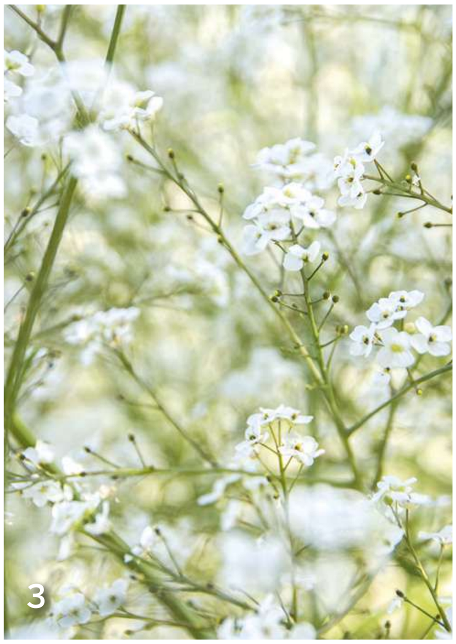

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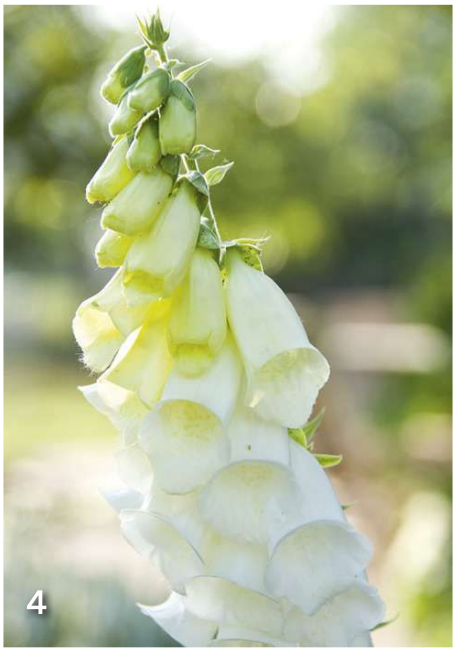

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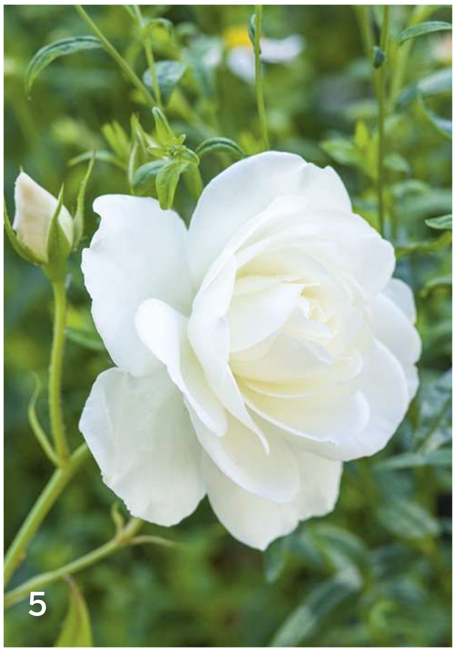

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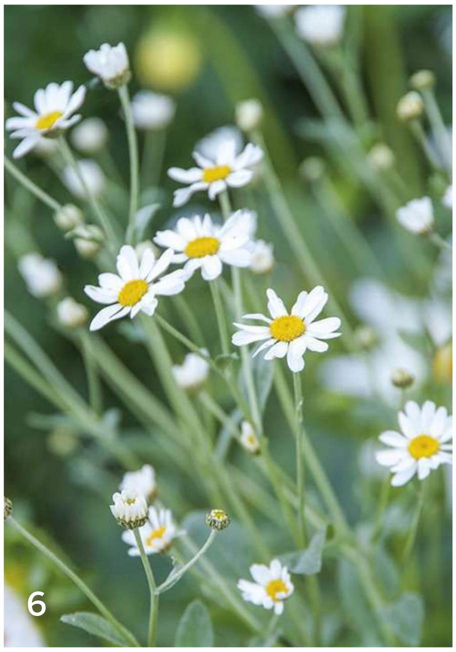

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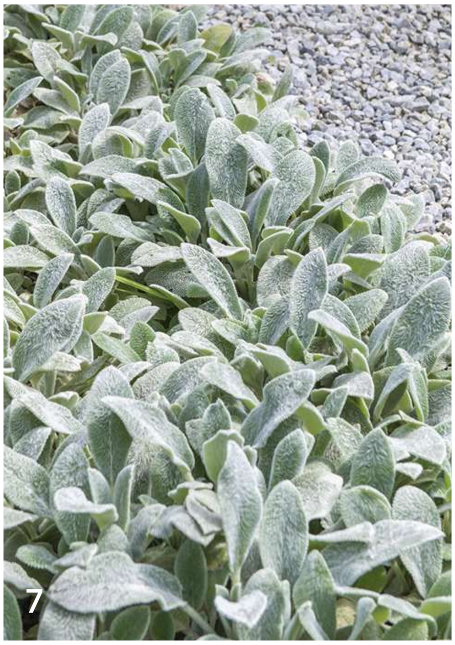

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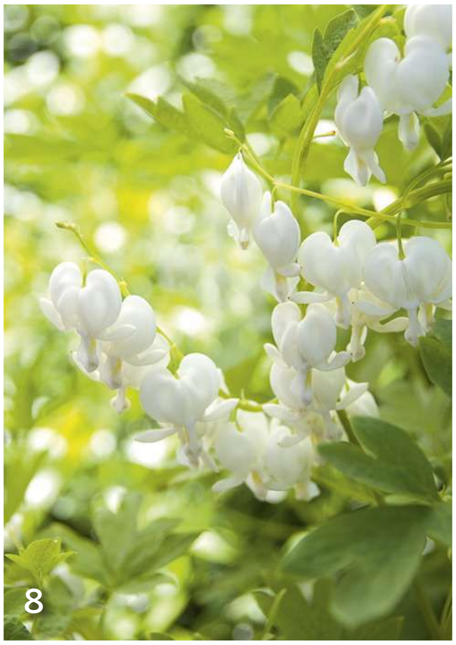

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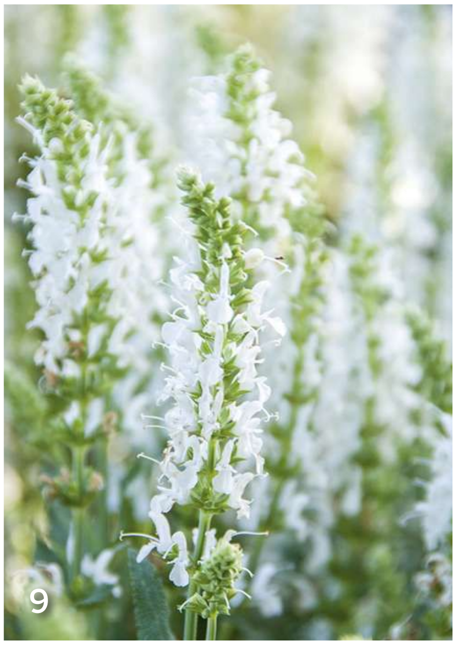


9

Sir Nicholas Bacon

The Royal Horticultural Society's latest president on introducing horticulture to schools, using gardens as therapy and why his mother might not have approved of his appointment

WORDS ANNIE GATTI PORTRAIT CHARLIE HOPKINSON

The tall, patrician figure of Sir Nicholas Bacon, with his wavy hair and bright-red socks, has become a familiar sight at Royal Horticultural Society events since June 2013 when he was elected president. A surprising choice to some – he has not exhibited or been a regular on the shows circuit – he has in fact been close to the soil since childhood, which was spent at Raveningham Hall on the 5,000-acre family estate in Norfolk. As he explained, in his comfortable office, a converted tack room in the stable yard, "The whole thing about gardening was imbued in one's fingers, in one's soul, without any formality about it."

Under his mother's stern supervision, he graduated from picking radishes to cutting and boxing chrysanthemums, aged eight, which were grown for market in their thousands in the walled garden. This gave him an early sensitivity to seasonality in gardens – he can't stand floral arrangements that use chrysanthemums in June – something he shares with his forebear Sir Francis Bacon who is commemorated at Raveningham with a four-seasons garden, complete with viewing mount.

Sir Nicholas was called to the Bar but returned to Raveningham to run the estate when his father became ill. With his wife Susan, who is a sculptor, they began to put their stamp on the Arts and Crafts garden his mother had developed. They added to her snowdrop and agapanthus collections, and re-inserted the Victorian vegetable garden, creating a framework of box hedging and cloaking the walls with espaliered fruit trees. "I think it's really important to show that a Victorian vegetable garden is relevant today, not only in terms of what is eaten but also in terms of it being an aesthetic phenomenon." The garden, which is open to the public 150 days a year and is visited by hundreds of schoolchildren, is maintained by three gardeners. The arboretum, which was planted mainly with oaks and cornus after the hurricane of 1987, is clearly Sir Nicholas's fiefdom and this is where he can be found at weekends, often with a chainsaw in hand.

It was his mother who first gave him membership of the RHS so what, I wondered, would she make of his current position? "She would be appalled that someone who knew so little about gardening should be president of the RHS," he laughs. He may lack the specialised knowledge of some other RHS Council members but he certainly has the business acumen, and connections, to steer the charity through its most ambitious development programme of recent times, and is determined to play his part in making it a much more inclusive place.

He's excited about the fact that already the RHS Campaign for School Gardening has put horticulture back into more than 19,000 schools. "The really important thing is to teach the teachers, and that's what the RHS advisors are doing." Keeping the interest going in secondary schools is trickier. "It's uncool to garden," says Sir Nicholas, quoting the *Horticulture Matters* finding that 70 per cent of 18-year-olds think gardening is for the intellectually challenged. "We need more 'cool' ambassadors, so that the staggering skills gap can be addressed."

One of the charity's greatest achievements so far, he thinks, is Britain in Bloom, the nationwide community gardening campaign that has been running for more than 50 years. Gardening as therapy is another RHS concern that Sir Nicholas champions. He has seen at first hand at Raveningham how it can really help those who are struggling with psychological or emotional issues. "We all know that gardening is good for you, it's just that it's not been proved yet in medical terms." He's looking forward to seeing inspirational examples of healing gardens at this year's Chelsea Flower Show, including Jekka McVicar's design for St John's Hospice, which includes a sculpture by his wife Susan.

It's clear that Sir Nicholas's close working relationship with RHS director general Sue Biggs is producing results for the society. Membership is continuing to rise, and last year reached an impressive 445,000. The abandoned garden attached to the former Worsley New Hall in Salford is set to become the RHS's garden in the northwest, to be opened in 2019, and plans have been drawn up for major refurbishment at Wisley, including a state-of-the-art science building. "The best aspect of the job is being part of an organisation that's moving from the past to the future, with leadership that can deliver," he says.

He'll be looking for another challenge when he steps down in two years' time, but there's also the lure of getting back to beekeeping and being in the garden at Raveningham on days when the bees swarm. □

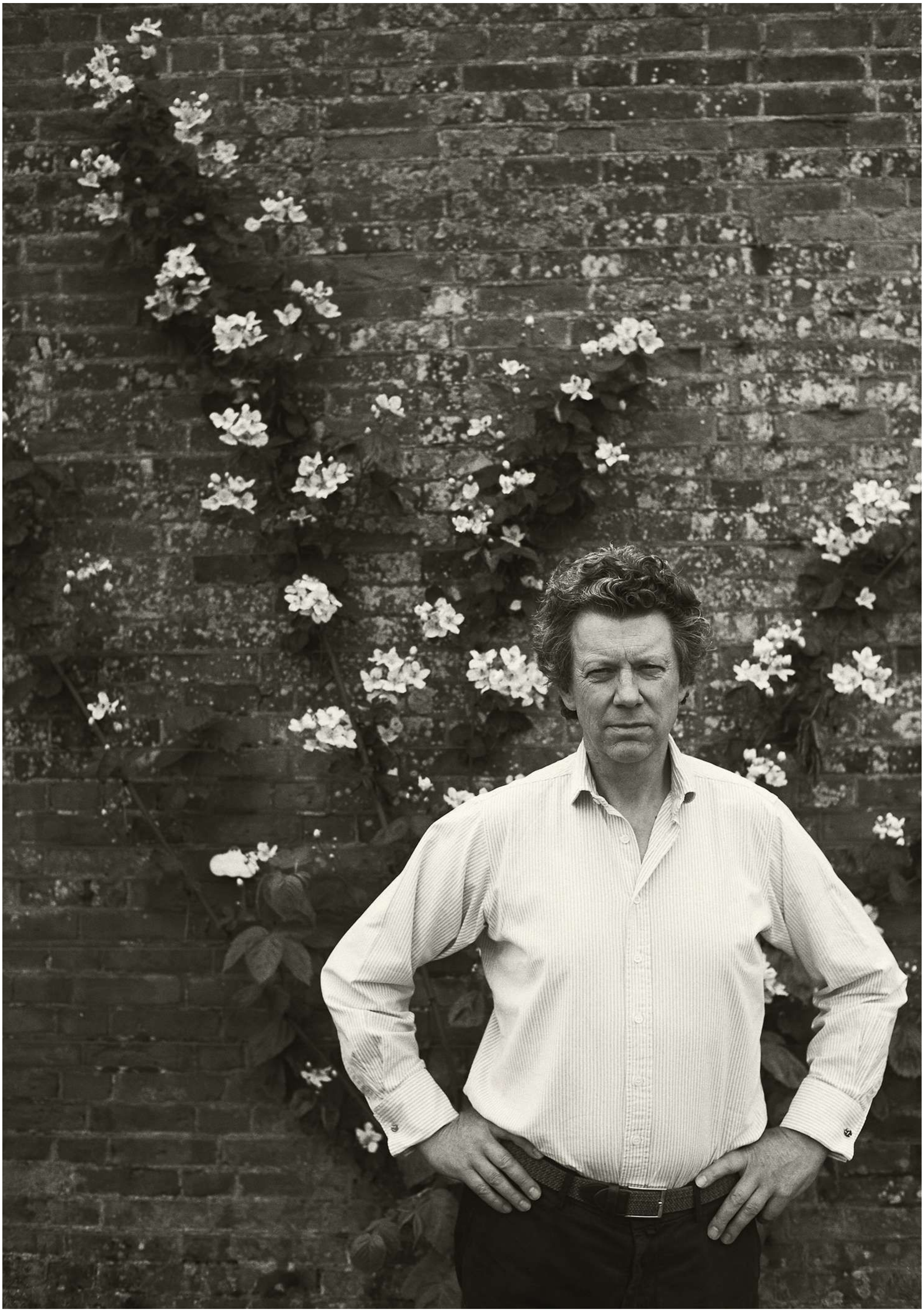
USEFUL INFORMATION

The gardens at Raveningham Hall open to the public April to August. Raveningham Estate, Raveningham, Norwich, Norfolk NR14 6NS. Tel 01508 548152, raveningham.com

To find out more about the RHS, how to join and what it does, including information on Britain in Bloom, the Campaign for School Gardening and to download a copy of *Horitcultural Matters* visit rhs.org.uk

NEXT MONTH Eugénie van Weede, founder of the Bingerden plant fair.

> *"The best aspect of the job is being part of an organisation that's moving from the past to the future, with leadership that can deliver"*



In brief

What Known as dogwoods or cornels there are around 60 species of *Cornus*, ranging from low, creeping, sub shrubs to large trees. Many have given rise to valuable garden ornamentals grown for flowers, foliage or winter stems.

Origins North America, Europe and Asia. They are mostly hardy, woody plants from cool, temperate regions.

Season The flowering dogwoods bloom from late spring to midsummer. Those grown for foliage are deciduous, but are beautiful in leaf from spring to autumn. Cornus grown for stem colour are great in winter.

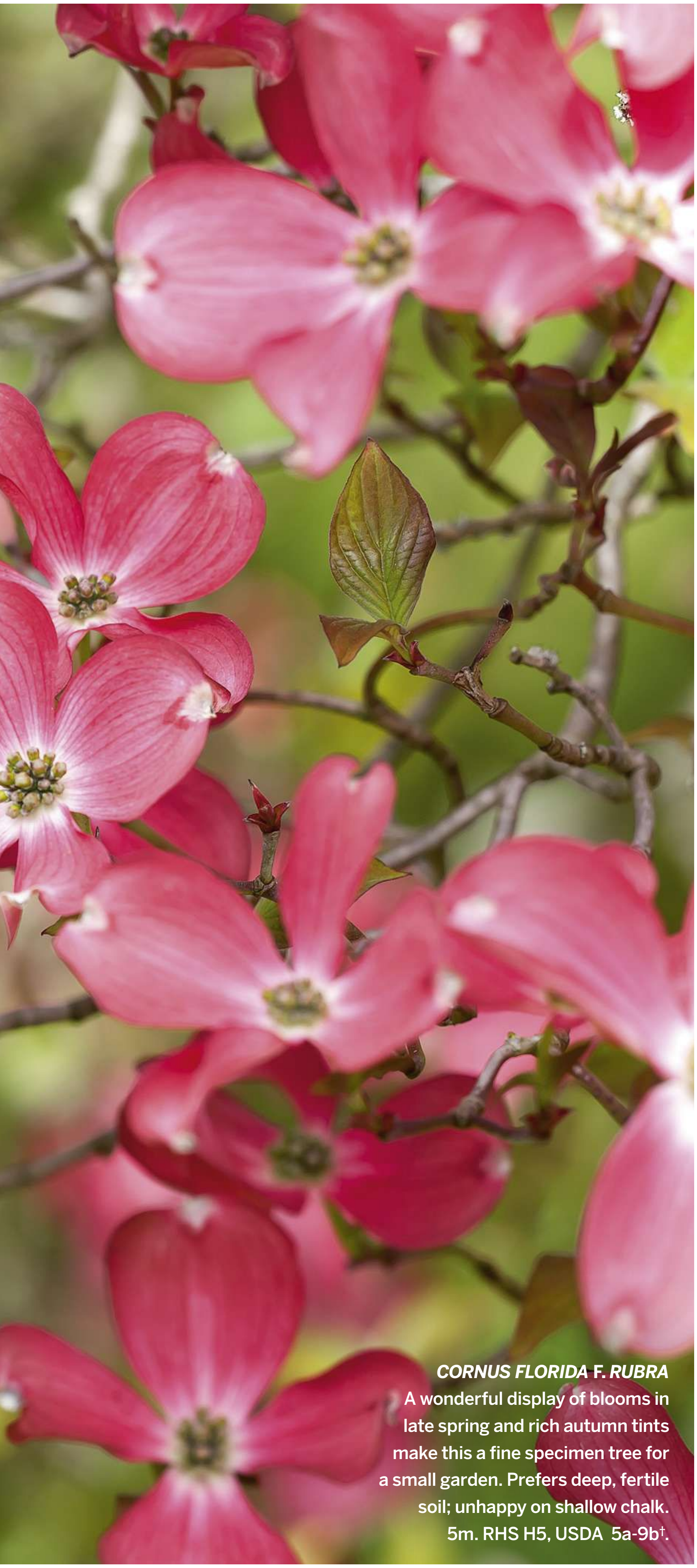
Size From 5 x 30cm (*Cornus canadensis*) to 8 x 6m (*Cornus controversa* 'Variegata', although most grow to around 3-5m.

Conditions Most well-drained, reasonably moist, fertile soils. The flowering dogwoods favour acid to neutral conditions.

Flowering dogwoods

These delightful small trees or large shrubs are often overlooked, but their glorious early summer flowers, sometimes combined with interesting foliage and stems, make them irresistible

WORDS **ANDY McINDOE** PHOTOGRAPHS **DIANNA JAZWINSKI**



CORNUS FLORIDA F. RUBRA
A wonderful display of blooms in late spring and rich autumn tints make this a fine specimen tree for a small garden. Prefers deep, fertile soil; unhappy on shallow chalk. 5m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b†.

Andy McIndoe is a horticulturist and author with a special interest in trees and shrubs. He has been responsible for 25 gold-medal winning exhibits at the RHS Chelsea Flower Show.

There are few more breathtaking sights than a flowering dogwood in full bloom. I first fell in love with *Cornus* 'Porlock' (see page 81) in the Sir Harold Hillier Gardens, Hampshire. The way the blooms cascaded down the branches, the poise of the flowers, the way they fluttered in the breeze, how they gazed upwards, avoiding the eye, but teasing and tantalising. Its beauty was best admired by grasping a branch and holding it down to admire those creamy bracts, four of them arranged as a flattened star around each dark bobble of tiny flowers. In autumn, strawberry-like fruits weighed down the branches; hardly delicious but edible and very tempting.

I loved this plant and had to own one. I grew it in a half barrel of loam-based compost in the courtyard of our cottage; it bloomed, it fruited and it remained our star attraction. When we moved it came with us and was planted on our inhospitable sandy hillside. It thrived, grew tall and wide and reliably excels every summer and autumn delighting us and visitors to our garden.

Now it's been joined by many others, including *C. kousa* 'Miss Satomi' (page 82). Planted under oak trees, in a situation that is far too dry, it reliably produces magnificent salmon-pink bracts along its reaching limbs in early summer. My plant is a poor specimen compared to the magnificent plant I remember seeing at Le Vasterival in Normandy. Planted alongside a *Rosa* 'Albertine' that was trained over low hoops interlaced with a soft blue clematis, it created a combination of which dreams are made.

The cultivars of *C. kousa* are often collectively referred to as Chinese dogwoods, although many originate from Japan and Korea. *C. kousa* var. *chinensis* 'China Girl' (page 82) is deservedly popular and has the advantage of large flower heads produced on young plants; some cultivars take a few years to bloom with any enthusiasm. *C. kousa* 'Teutonia' is another large, flowering form ▷

*Holds an Award of Garden Merit from the Royal Horticultural Society. †Hardiness ratings given where available. NOTE Heights given are after ten years; some may eventually grow taller.

▷ with immaculate flower heads of rich cream. I have shown this in recent years at RHS Chelsea Flower Show and it has always proved to be a star of the show.

Two cultivars with variegated foliage are worthy of note. One *C. kousa* 'Gold Star' has a large central blotch of golden yellow in the centre of each leaf. Some may feel that this conflicts with the creamy bracts, however, the effect is pleasing. In autumn the leaves turn to crimson and purple. The other, *C. kousa* 'Summer Fun', has grey-green and cream variegated foliage; lovely with the creamy bracts.

The North American dogwoods, cultivars of *C. florida* and *C. nuttallii*, are less popular because of their susceptibility to the fungal disease cornus anthracnose. A pity, as most mature to form wonderful, pagoda-like small trees with elegant branches and upturned twigs. In winter, flowerbuds are enclosed by the immature bracts on the bare branches, appearing like tiny finials at the end of every twig. As the blooms develop the bracts remain joined at the tips before they pop open.

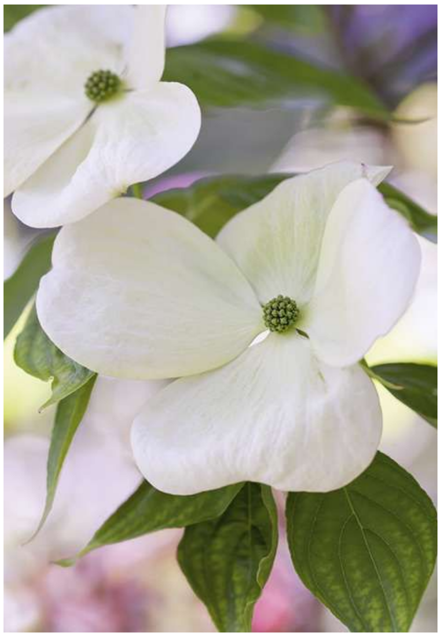
I have a large *C. florida* f. *rubra* (see previous page) that positively glows rich crimson-pink when in full bloom and lights up the garden in shades of scarlet and flame in autumn. Sadly, it's starting to die back as often happens; a condition possibly exacerbated by wet winters.

The hybridisation of flowering dogwoods has led to the development of some spectacular flowering shrubs. *C.* Venus (right), bred in the USA, has caused a stir with its massive creamy-white flower heads, which are produced freely, even on young plants. The Stellar series of hybrid flowering dogwoods (see Celestial and Aurora, right), exhibit similar flower quality and disease resistance, and will hopefully encourage more to plant these wonderful shrubs and trees.

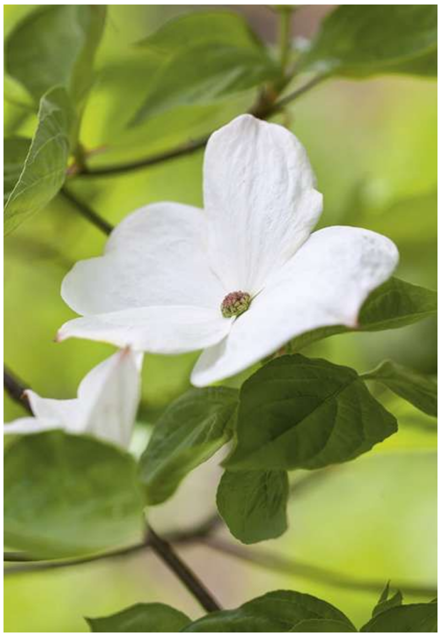
Cornus is a genus for all seasons. Those grown for their leaves are some of the most beautiful foliage shrubs. Dogwoods grown for the colour of their stems light up the winter garden. Flowering dogwoods wisely hold back their floriferous performance until early summer, after any possible competition from our more familiar flowering trees. When it comes to summer-flowering trees and large shrubs there is nothing to touch them. □

- Andy's recommendations for flowering dogwoods continue over the next six pages.

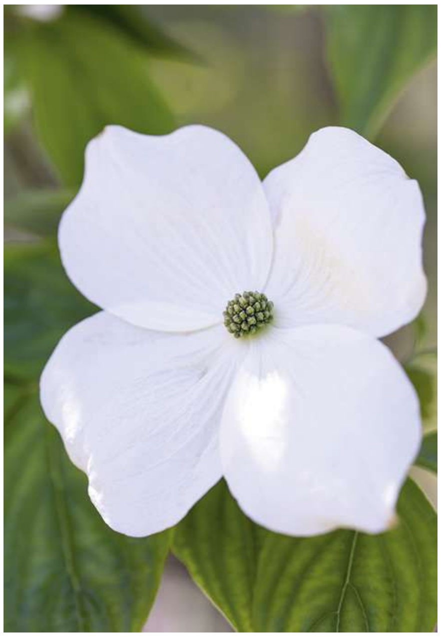
Hybrid dogwoods



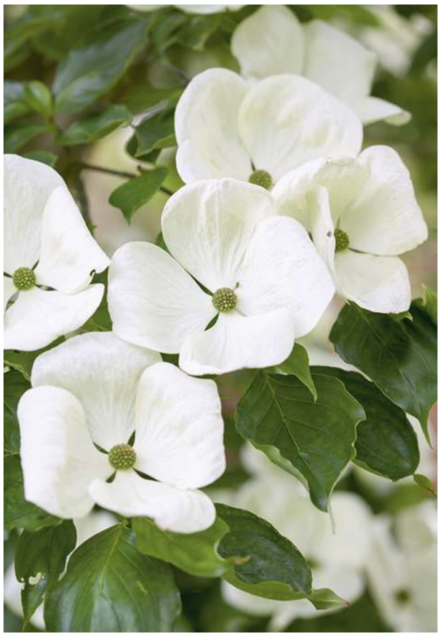
***CORNUS* CELESTIAL (= 'RUTDAN')**
A vigorous new cultivar, bred for disease resistance. Domed, greenish-white bracts in early summer and good autumn leaf colour. Upright and narrow in habit on moist, well-drained, acid soil. 5m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.



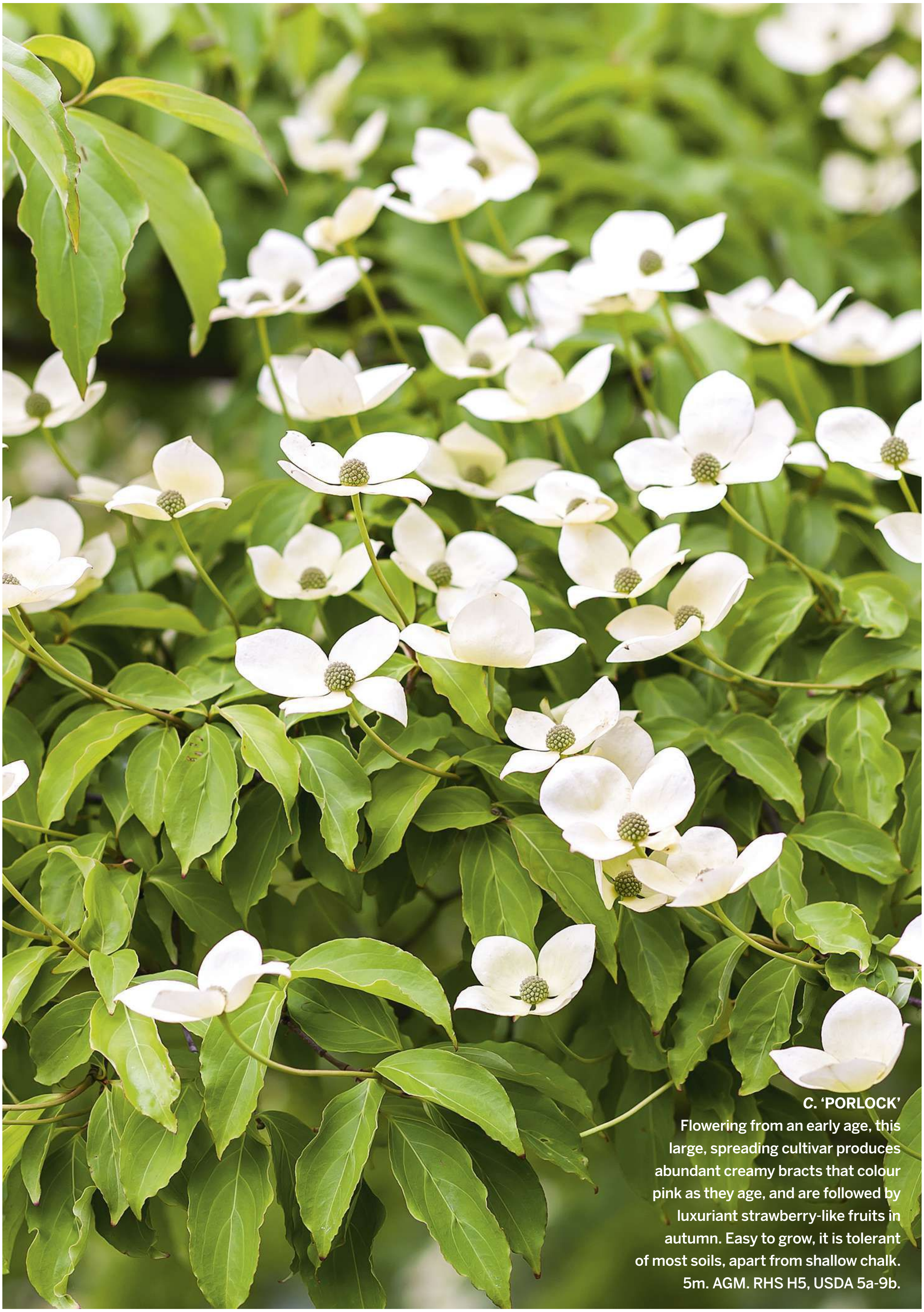
***C.* 'EDDIE'S WHITE WONDER'**
Large, rounded, creamy-white blooms appear in early spring, and are spectacular after a good summer the previous year. Crimson-pink autumn colour. Upright and narrow in habit. 4m. AGM*. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.



***C.* AURORA (= 'RUTBAN')**
A robust, upright, hybrid dogwood with dark-green foliage and long-lasting autumn colour. Wonderful display of white bracts in an open, sunny position; no fruit. A good small, specimen tree. 5m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

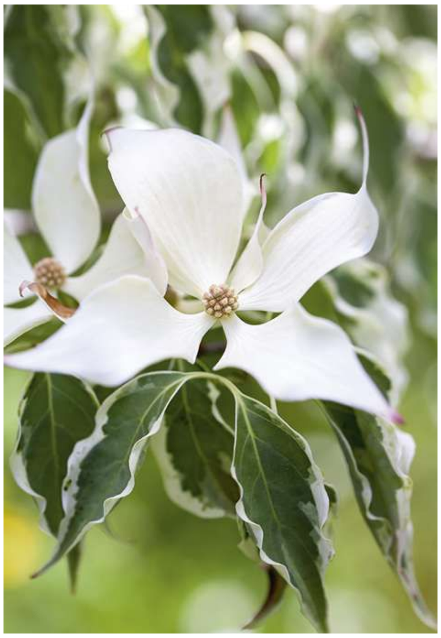


***C.* VENUS (= 'KN30 8')**
A recent introduction with exceptionally large, creamy-white bracts. Dark-green foliage and vibrant autumn colour. Best in a sheltered situation to avoid damage to flowers. 4m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

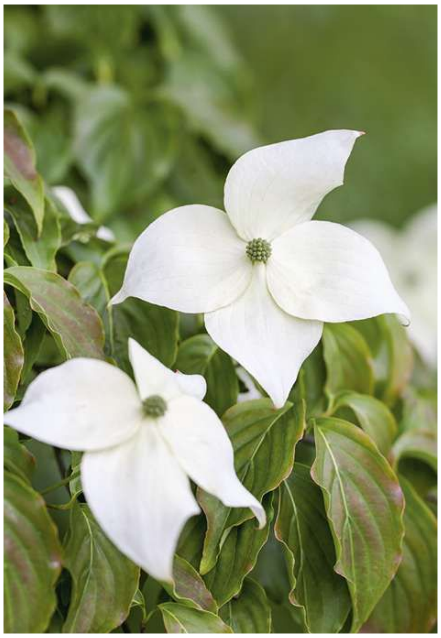


C. 'PORLOCK'
Flowering from an early age, this large, spreading cultivar produces abundant creamy bracts that colour pink as they age, and are followed by luxuriant strawberry-like fruits in autumn. Easy to grow, it is tolerant of most soils, apart from shallow chalk. 5m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

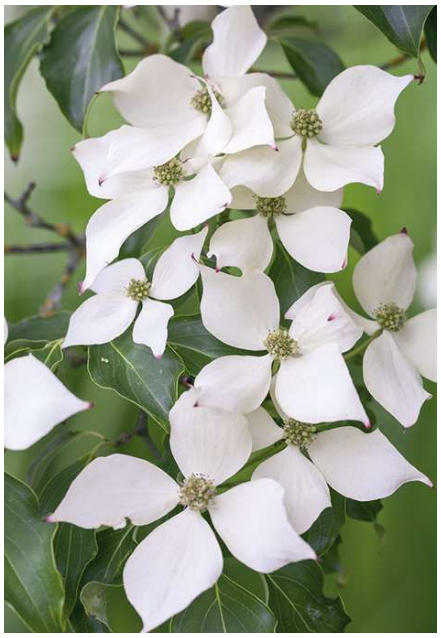
Chinese dogwoods



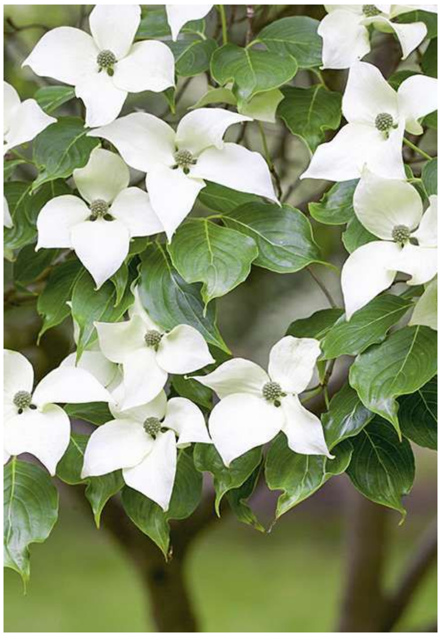
C. KOUSA **'WOLF EYES'**
Pretty, variegated shrub with pointed, grey-green leaves margined with white; starry, white blooms in early summer. Best grown in semi-shade on moist, well-drained, acid soil. 3m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.



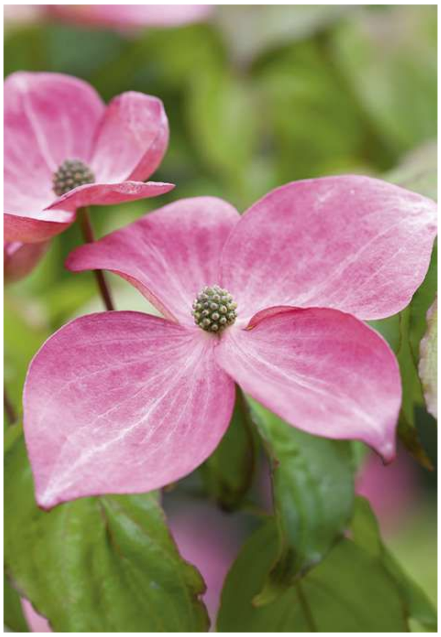
C. KOUSA **VAR. *CHINENSIS***
Popular and easy to grow. Thrives on most soils, including heavy clay. Robust and free flowering with the bonus of good autumn colour and crimson fruits that follow creamy flowers. 5m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.



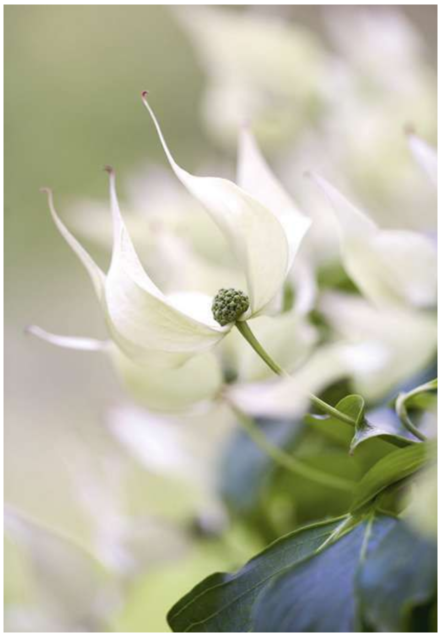
C. KOUSA **'JOHN SLOCOCK'**
A bushy plant; upright, then spreading in character. The creamy-white bracts become blotched with pink as they age and are followed by deep-pink fruits. Outstanding. 4m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.



C. KOUSA **VAR. *CHINENSIS* 'CHINA GIRL'**
Abundant, creamy-white bracts that do not blush pink as they fade. The bracts start small, star-like and green, and stand on short stalks along the branches. Upright in habit. 4m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

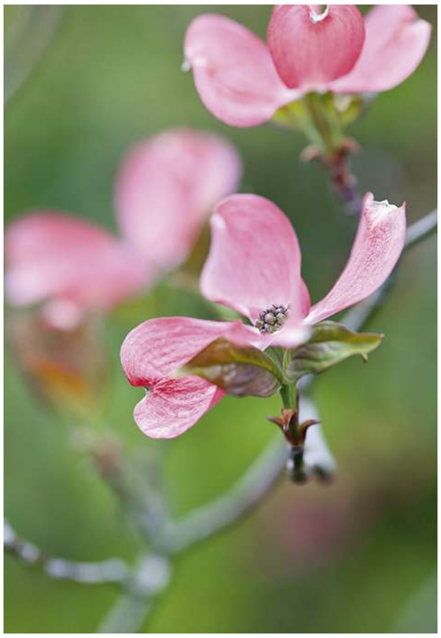


C. KOUSA **'MISS SATOMI'**
Elegant plant with a broad, spreading habit. Large, pink bracts, poised along branches in early summer, become more intense in colour as they age. Orange-red autumn foliage. 3m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

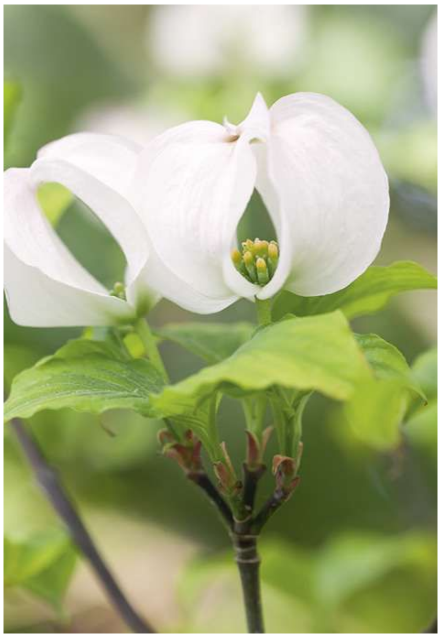


C. KOUSA **'MADAME BUTTERFLY'**
Elegantly pointed bracts curve inwards at first as the blooms sit butterfly-like along the branches; they blush pink as they age. Rich autumn tints and lychee-like fruits appear in autumn. 4m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

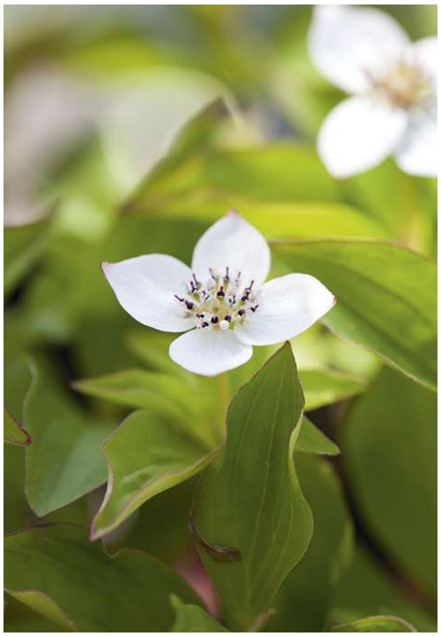
North American dogwoods



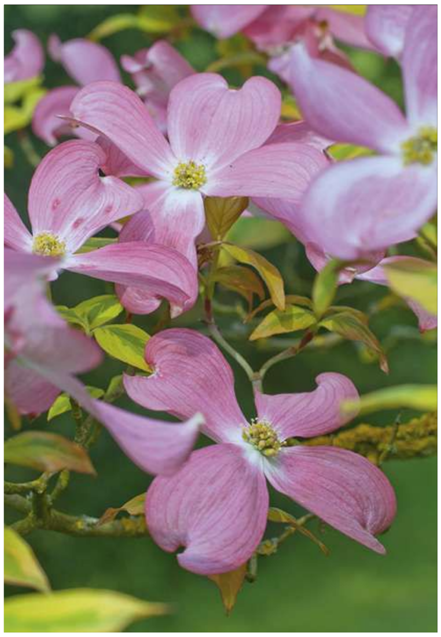
***C. FLORIDA* 'CHEROKEE CHIEF'**
An improved form of flowering dogwood with abundant blooms on wonderfully sculptural branches in late spring. Lovely autumn foliage. Prefers rich, fertile soil; unhappy on shallow chalk. 5m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.



***C. FLORIDA* 'RAINBOW'**
Rich, gold-margined leaves turn purple-red edged with scarlet in autumn. Large, white blooms resemble wontons as they open at the tips of the shoots. Compact and upright. 3m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.



C. CANADENSIS
The tiny, creeping dogwood forms mats of short, upright stems and dark-green leaves studded with small, white starry blooms. Clusters of red berries follow in autumn. 10cm. RHS H7, USDA 2a-7b.



FREDERIC DIDILLON / GAP PHOTOS

***C. FLORIDA* 'SUNSET'**
Mature leaves are mostly gold, splashed green in the centres, turning red, purple and pink in autumn. Large, deep-pink flowers in late spring are striking against the leaves. 3m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-9b.

Cultivation

Flowering dogwoods favour neutral to acid, reasonably moist, but well-drained fertile soil, with plenty of organic matter. However, they are more tolerant than generally thought and often succeed in alkaline conditions if mulched well with organic compost.
I have grown them successfully on poor sandy soils and in containers using loam-based growing media.
They are at their best with some light shade and shelter from deciduous trees; they thrive in open woodland settings. Many, such as *C.* 'Porlock' and *C. florida* 'Cherokee Chief', make splendid flowering trees for small gardens. Flowering dogwoods are best planted as young, container-grown plants. Young plants are not particularly attractive, giving little idea of the glorious subjects they will become; which puts many off planting them.

Pests and diseases

Flowering dogwoods, especially *C. florida*, suffer from various fungal diseases, especially powdery mildew and anthracnose. These, along with the dogwood borer insect have caused damage to and death of many trees in their natural habitat. The fungal diseases can be a problem in gardens, however, many new hybrids, such as the Cherokee and Celestial hybrids, are more resistant. *C. florida* and *C. kousa* both resent poor drainage, which causes root rot.

Added interest

Many dogwoods grown for their foliage or stems have the added bonus of summer flowers. For example, the variegated *C. controversa* 'Variegata' is a lighter and more graceful form of *C. controversa* (a prominent feature of the Japanese wooded landscape), and, with a similar wedding-cake silhouette, is one of the most beautiful variegated plants. The leaves are delicate, hanging along the elegantly poised branches. The creamy, early summer flowers add to the frothy, lightness of the plant.

Of smaller stature, but with similar habit, is *C. alternifolia* 'Argentea'. Its dark stems and sage and white leaves make it easier to accommodate in the average garden. It is lighter, frothier and perhaps prettier than its larger cousin. Less frequently seen, *C. mas* 'Variegata' (below right) is a particularly fine foliage shrub, with the benefit of yellow, fluffy flowers on bare branches in late winter. The defined green and white leaves provide the perfect setting for cherry-like fruits that develop in autumn.

Perhaps the best-known members of the genus are those grown for their winter stems: cultivars of *C. sanguinea*, *C. alba* and *C. sericea*. Some of these have the benefit of attractive and colourful foliage giving them year-round appeal. *C. alba* 'Sibirica Variegata' is one of the most useful with pleasing green-and-white variegated leaves, flushed with purple-pink, rich autumn foliage and dark red winter stems. It grows to only 1.2m, with a similar spread, so can be left unpruned. It is an excellent mixer with perennials, roses and other shrubs.

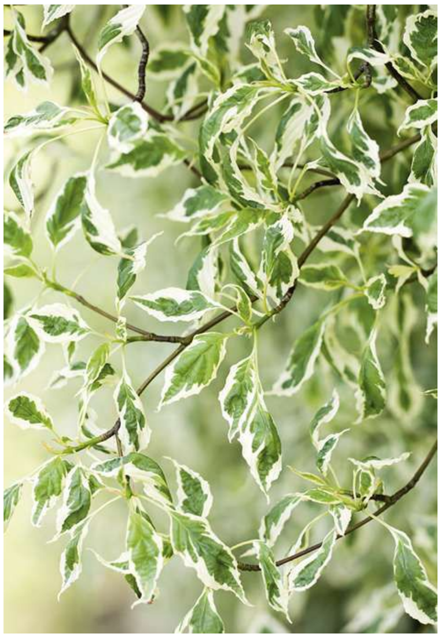
Where to see

- **The Sir Harold Hillier Gardens**
  Jermyns Lane, Romsey,
  Hampshire SO51 0QA.
  Tel 01794 369317/318,
  hilliergardens.org.uk
  National collection holder.
- **Newby Hall**
  Ripon, North Yorkshire HG4 5AE.
  Tel 01423 322583,
  newbyhallandgardens.com
  National collection holder.
- **The Savill Garden**
  Crown Estate Office, Windsor Great
  Park, Windsor, Berkshire SL4 2HT.
  windsorgreatpark.co.uk
  Many fine, mature specimens.

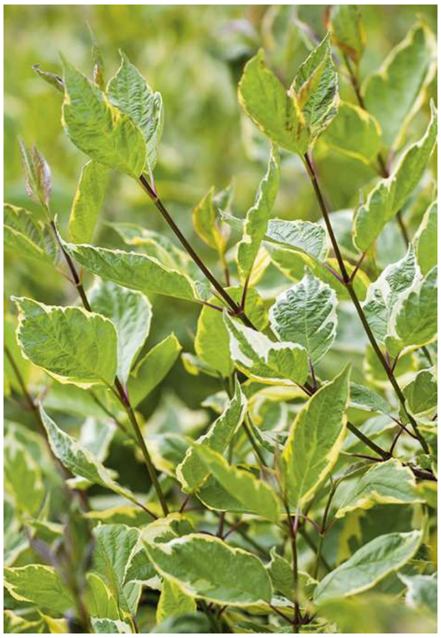
Where to buy

- **Bluebell Nursery and Arboretum**
  Annwell Lane, Smisby, Ashby-de-la-Zouch, Leicestershire LE65 2TA.
  Tel 01530 413700,
  bluebellnursery.com
- **Junker's Nursery**
  Higher Cobhay, Milverton, Taunton,
  Somerset TA4 1NJ.
  Tel 01823 400007, junker.co.uk

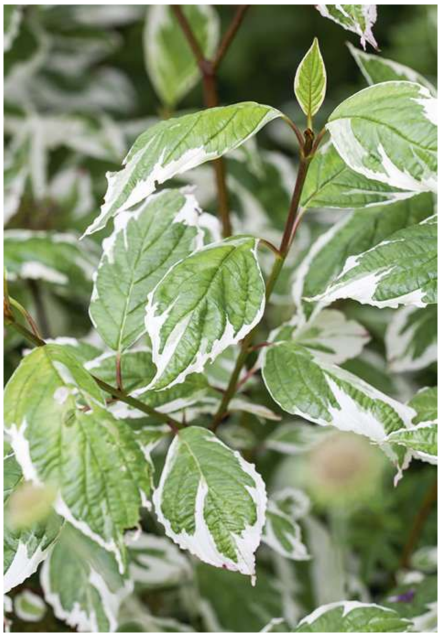
Dogwoods grown for foliage and stem



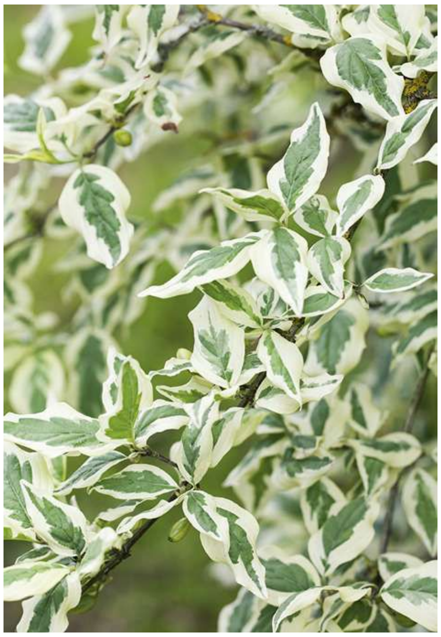
***C. ALTERNIFOLIA* 'ARGENTEA'**
The variegated dogwood is one of the finest foliage shrubs with floating horizontal branches and delicate green and white leaves. Lacy, white flowers in early summer. 3m. AGM. RHS H6, USDA 4a-8b.



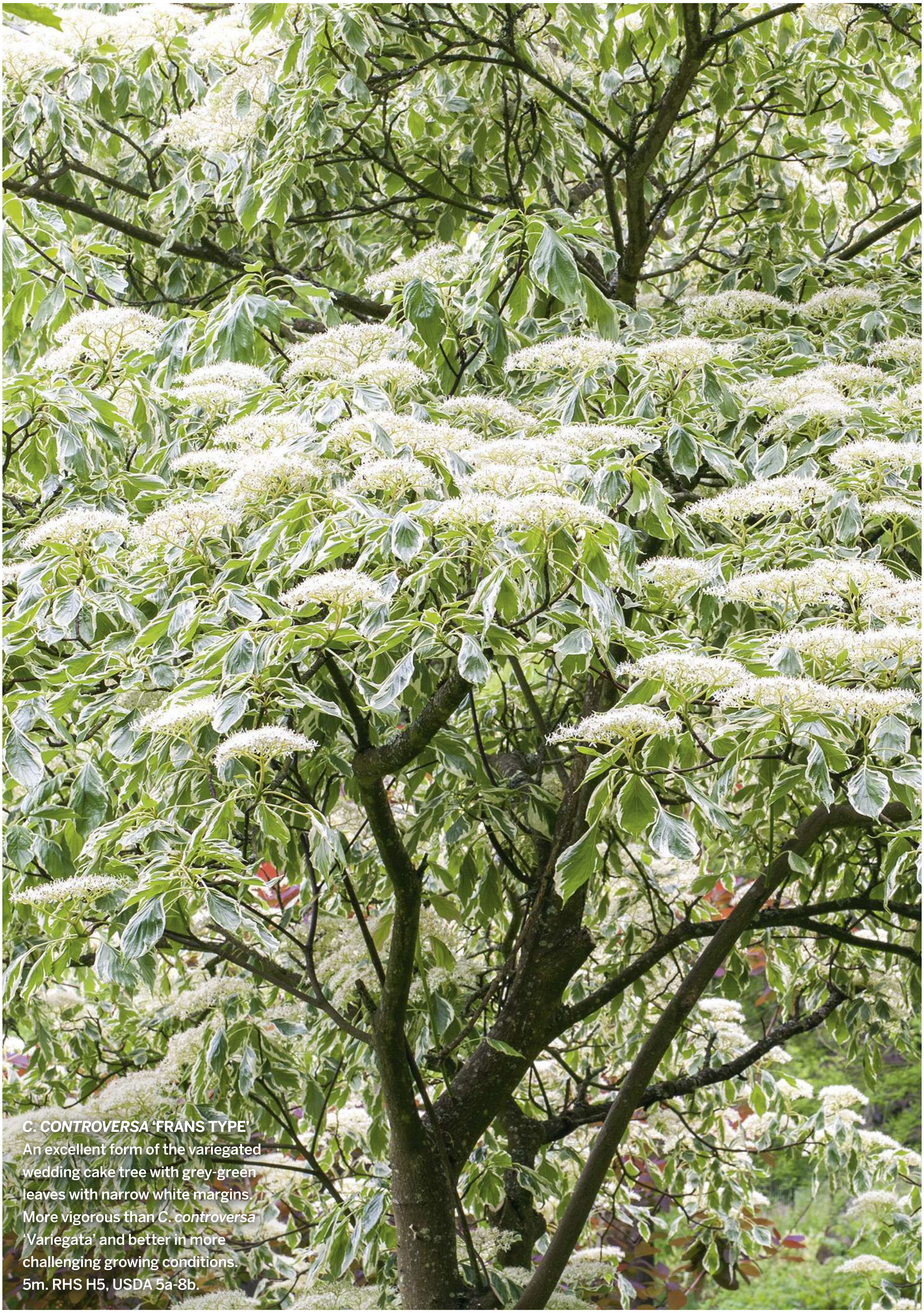
***C. ALBA* 'GOUCHAULTII'**
Dark-red stems in winter remain decorative after the ochre and green leaves have fallen. Thrives on any soil; excellent in wet conditions. Cut back hard to 20cm every two years. 1.8m. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.



***C. ALBA* 'SIBIRICA VARIEGATA'**
Much less vigorous than other red-barked dogwoods; ideal for smaller gardens. Attractive foliage with the bonus of dark red winter stems. Grows on any soil in sun or shade. 1.2m. AGM. RHS H7, USDA 3a-7b.



***C. MAS* 'VARIEGATA'**
Tiny, golden flowers on bare stems in late winter before the white and green leaves unfurl. Scarlet fruits in autumn. Slow growing and upright in habit when young. 3m. AGM. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.



C. *CONTROVERSA* 'FRANS TYPE' An excellent form of the variegated wedding cake tree with grey-green leaves with narrow white margins. More vigorous than *C. controversa* 'Variegata' and better in more challenging growing conditions. 5m. RHS H5, USDA 5a-8b.

Herbs for cooks

From spearmint to French tarragon, herb expert Jekka McVicar lists the essential culinary herbs that no gardener cook should be without

WORDS JEKKA McVICAR PHOTOGRAPHS ANDREW MONTGOMERY

Herbs quite simply transform a meal into a feast – they not only make the food look and taste appealing, they also stimulate the digestion and are one of the essential ingredients that make a meal come alive. Furthermore, they look beautiful in the garden or in containers and, as many of the culinary herbs are from the *Lamiaceae* family, including thyme, rosemary, sage, oregano, mint and basil, they are very attractive to bees and butterflies.

Of all the herbs I grow, the one I believe is most synonymous with summer is basil (including Greek and Thai basil, described on page 88). It conjures up thoughts of the Mediterranean, sitting outside on a warm evening and sharing a meal with the family, be it pizza, where the basil can be added to the dough (a recipe follows on page 90), a salad, or a panna cotta, where the custard is flavoured with basil, or simply to make a refreshing tisane (a herbal tea). In Greece, basil is a sign of welcome and you find pots placed at the entrance to the home or on the table where it is not only a great fly repellent but also a mosquito repellent – rubbing crushed leaves on to the skin will help you avoid being bitten. My top tip for growing this herb successfully in the UK, where our summers can be unpredictable and prone to cold spells at night, is to water your containers in the morning before you go to work, never at night, as this will stop the plants sulking and 'damping off'.

Another herb from the Mediterranean that is only just becoming known and is incredibly useful in the kitchen, is savory. There are varying forms of this herb but, for our UK climate, the one that is the most robust is winter savory (*Satureja montana*). The leaves have a fiery, peppery flavour eaten straight from the bush and, when cooked, this flavour infuses into the food, cutting down on the amount of salt required for extra seasoning and aiding digestion, especially if the dish is predominantly beans or pulses.

If asked which herb I could not survive without it would be mint, such as spearmint 'Tashkent' (*Mentha spicata* 'Tashkent', described on page 88), for not only does it look great in flower in any border where it can be covered in butterflies and bees, it has many diverse uses in the kitchen. For example, the leaves can be used in both sweet and savoury dishes, it makes cold or hot tisanes, it is amazing in cocktails such as mojitos and, similar to basil, it deters mosquitoes when the crushed leaves are rubbed on to the skin.

Herbs are essential for our everyday wellbeing as they not only provide flavour and additional nutritional benefits to food, but also maintain a healthy ecosystem in the garden and keep our livestock healthy and productive. Even if you only have space for a few pots, herbs are guaranteed to lift your spirits and transform your meals. □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Jekka's Herb Farm, Rose Cottage,
Shellards Lane, Alveston,
Bristol BS35 3SY.
Tel 01454 418878.
Email sales@jekkasherbfarm.com
Website jekkasherbfarm.com
Open The farm holds open days for the public. Check the calendar on the website.
Chelsea 2016 Don't miss Jekka's herb-filled, healing show garden in aid of St John's Hospice, at this year's RHS Chelsea Flower Show. See page 50 for details.

• **Turn for 12 of Jekka's recommended herbs**

Jekka gathers marigolds to use the petals in her cooking. Her herb garden is a riot of colour during summer when plants, such as the blue-flowered hyssop are in full bloom.

12 essential herbs

1 *Mentha spicata* ‘Tashkent’ (spearmint)
A hardy, herbaceous perennial with mauve flowers and textured, scented leaves. Good with potatoes, salads and in mint sauce. Grown from root or tip cuttings only. 80cm.

2 *Salvia officinalis* (common sage)
Frost-hardy, evergreen perennial with purple, edible flowers and aromatic leaves. Good flavour. Can be grown from seed. 45cm.

3 *Ocimum basilicum* ‘Horapha’ (Thai basil)
A frost-tender annual that has small, pale mulberry flowers and aniseed scented leaves. Only grown from seed. 30cm.

4 *Ocimum minimum* (Greek basil)
Frost-tender annual with white flowers. Small, aromatic leaves. Use in salads and cheese dishes. Only grown from seed. 23cm.

5 *Borago officinalis* ‘Alba’ (borage)
Frost-hardy annual with white flowers that can be used in drinks and salads. Young leaves are great in salads or chilled soup. Only grown from seed. 45cm.

6 *Diplotaxis muralis* (wild rocket)
Fully hardy, herbaceous perennial with yellow flowers in summer. Leaves are delicious in salads. Can be grown from seed. 75cm.

7 *Allium schoenoprasum* (chives)
Fully hardy, herbaceous perennial. Mild onion flavour. Add to salads, egg and cheese dishes. Can be grown from seed. 30cm.

8 *Artemisia dracunculus* (French tarragon)
Frost-hardy, herbaceous perennial. Aromatic leaves have an aniseed flavour. Grown from root or tip cuttings only. 90cm.

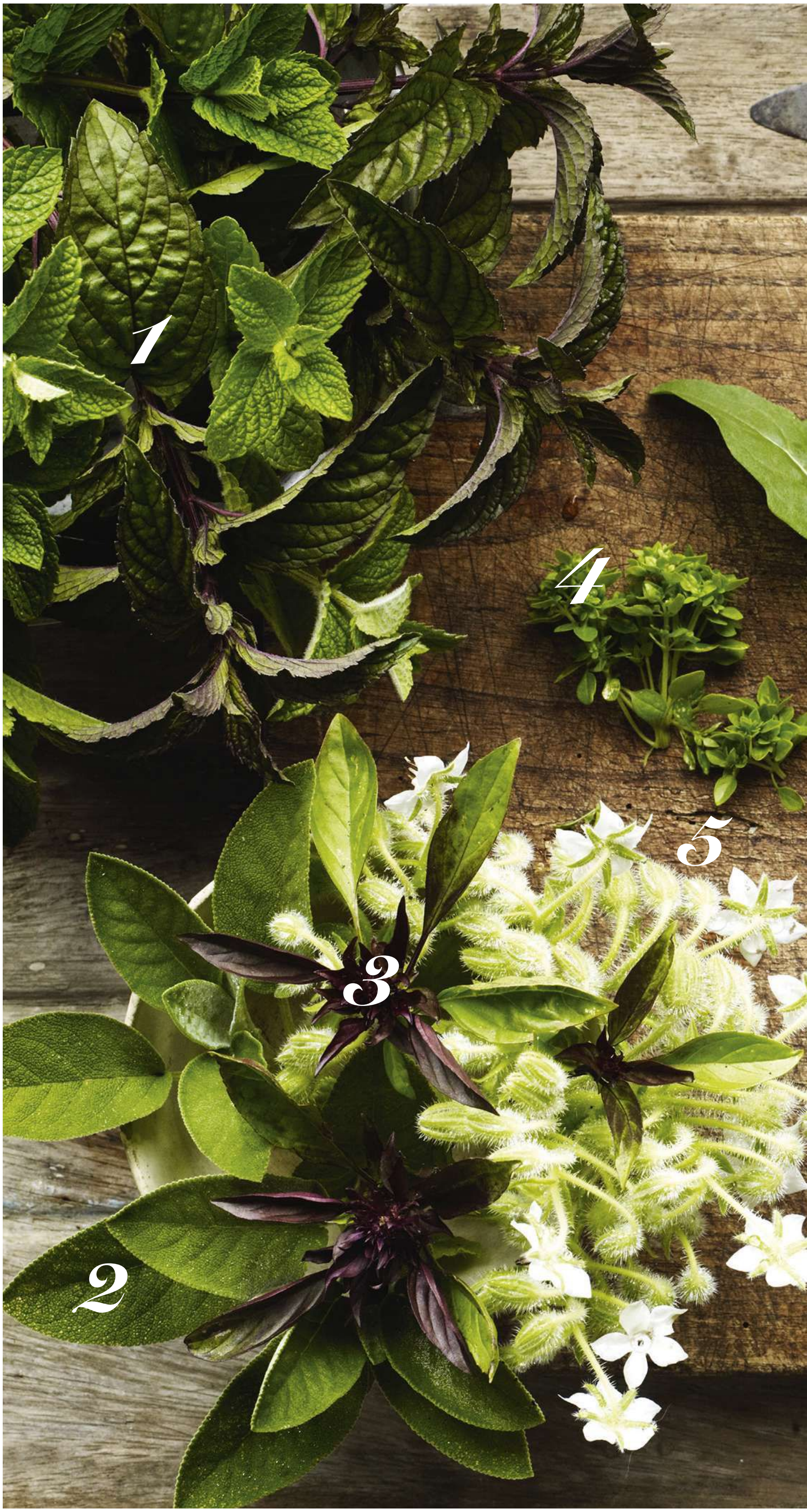
9 *Satureja montana* (winter savory)
Fully hardy, perennial, semi-evergreen. Has small, white flowers. Good for salt-free diets. Can be grown from seed. 30cm.

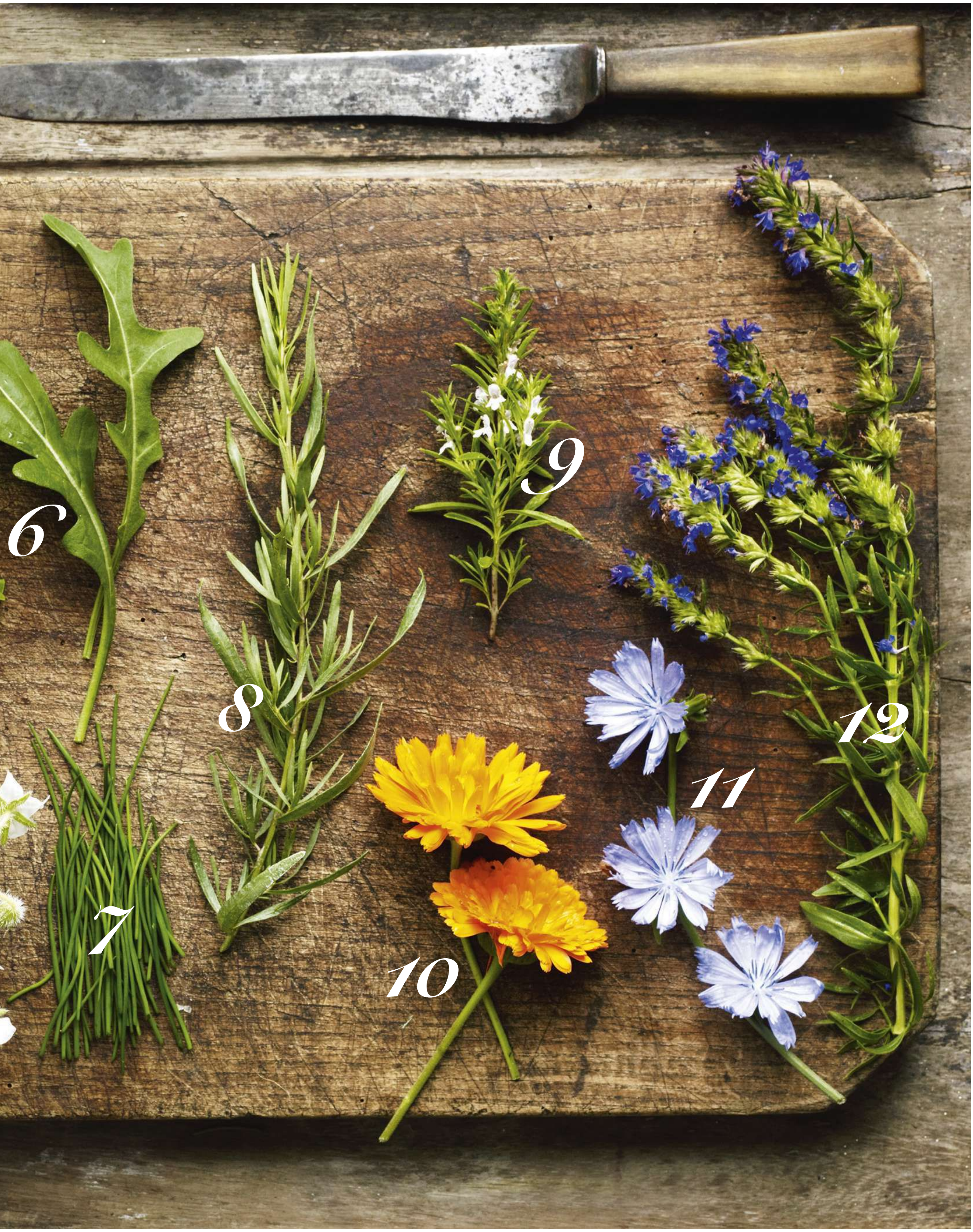
10 *Calendula officinalis* (pot marigold)
Frost-hardy annual with orange flowers. Petals are lovely in salads, pastry and butters. Only grown from seed. 45cm.

11 *Cichorium intybus* (chicory)
Fully hardy, herbaceous perennial with blue flowers (good for drinks) and slightly bitter leaves. Use young leaves and flowers in salads. Can be grown from seed. 1m.

12 *Hyssopus officinalis* (hyssop)
Fully hardy perennial with dark-blue flowers. Aromatic leaves have a bitter, minty flavour. Good with fatty fish and meat. Can be grown from seed. 80cm.

- Turn for Jekka’s herb-inspired recipes

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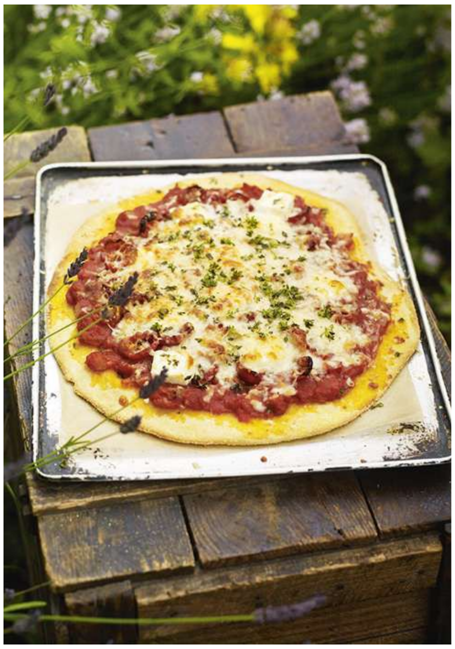


Pizza with Greek basil

SERVES 2

- **175g plain flour plus extra for rolling out**
- **1tsp salt**
- **1tsp easy blend dried yeast**
- **½tsp golden caster sugar**
- **1tbsp olive oil, plus extra for drizzling**
- **2tbsp Greek basil leaves removed from the stem**
- **225g fresh tomatoes skinned and chopped, or 1 x 400g tin of chopped tomatoes**
- **1 small onion peeled and finely chopped**
- **150g mozzarella cut into thin slices**

Preheat the oven to 220°C. Sift the flour, salt, yeast and sugar into a bowl and make a well in the centre, then add the olive oil and pour in 120ml of hand-hot water. Mix into a ball of dough and transfer to a work surface, kneading for approx 3-5 minutes until elastic. Put the dough in a large bowl and cover with lightly oiled cling film. Leave somewhere warm for the dough to prove (about 45-60 minutes).

Make the topping while the dough rises. Heat the oil in a small saucepan and cook the onion until clear. Add the chopped tomatoes, season to taste and leave to simmer uncovered until there is very little liquid left.

When the dough is ready, lightly dust a work surface with flour and half the basil leaves and knead it until all the leaves are in the dough. Make a ball and use a rolling pin to roll the dough into a circle approx 25cm diameter and stretch it out with your hands. Lay on a pizza stone or tin, or a baking tray lined with non-stick paper. Spread on the sauce, scatter the mozzarella and the remaining basil leaves on top and drizzle lightly with oil. Bake for 10-12 minutes until the crust is golden brown.

Roast chicken with French tarragon and lemon

SERVES 4-6

- **1.35kg organic or free-range chicken**
- **2 good handfuls of French tarragon**
- **4 cloves of garlic, finely chopped**
- **Light olive oil**
- **10g softened unsalted butter**
- **1 lemon, sliced**
- **Black pepper and salt**

Preheat the oven to 175°C. Rub the chicken with olive oil. Mix the unsalted butter with the chopped garlic. Put the garlic butter, plus a few sprigs of tarragon in the cavity along with a couple of slices of lemon. Rub a roasting tin with olive oil, then line the base of the tin with the tarragon (no need to strip from the stem) and the remaining slices of lemon. Put the chicken on to a bed of the remaining tarragon.

Transfer the chicken to the preheated oven and roast for approximately one and a half hours until fully cooked (use an oven thermometer to check it's between 160°C and 165°C). During the cooking time, baste the chicken every now and then. Once cooked, remove the chicken to a serving board, cover with tin foil and let it rest before carving. Strain the juices into a small jug to be poured over the meal. Serve the chicken with new potatoes and a green salad.

French tarragon is the reason I became a herb farmer. Over 30 years ago, a friend of mine came to my home in Bristol to ask for some tarragon, as she was having a go at an Elizabeth David recipe. I realised you couldn't buy fresh tarragon anywhere in those days so I decided to start growing it to sell myself.

Gnocchi with sage butter

SERVES 4

- **275g King Edward potatoes, washed with skins on**
- **95g plain flour plus extra for rolling**
- **1 large egg, lightly beaten**
- **Black pepper and salt**
- **8 fresh torn sage leaves plus a couple for dressing**
- **50g unsalted butter**
- **1 clove garlic, finely chopped or crushed**
- **Grated parmesan**

Simmer the potatoes in a large saucepan of water for 20 minutes. Drain, remove the skin (use a tea towel to hold the hot potatoes) and place into a bowl. Mash the potatoes with an electric hand blender until smooth and set aside to cool. Once cool, add the flour, half the beaten egg and seasoning. Combine the ingredients and when a ball forms, knead lightly in the bowl. Add more egg if too dry.

Transfer the mixture to a floured surface, divide into quarters and roll each into sausage shapes 1cm in diameter, then cut into 2.5cm pieces, rolling into dumplings. Put on a tray, cover with cling film and chill in the fridge for at least half an hour. They will keep for a day.

When chilled, press the back of a fork into the top of the dumplings to make ridges. Bring a large, shallow pan of water to the boil, turn down to a simmer and put a serving bowl in a warm oven. Drop the gnocchi into the water, cook for approx 3 minutes and remove to the warm dish using a draining spoon. Gently melt the butter with the garlic in a small pan. When the garlic browns, add the torn sage leaves and allow the butter to froth while the leaves crisp. Spoon the butter over the gnocchi, sprinkle on parmesan and serve.

Beetroot and carrot salad with chives and a mint dressing

SERVES 4

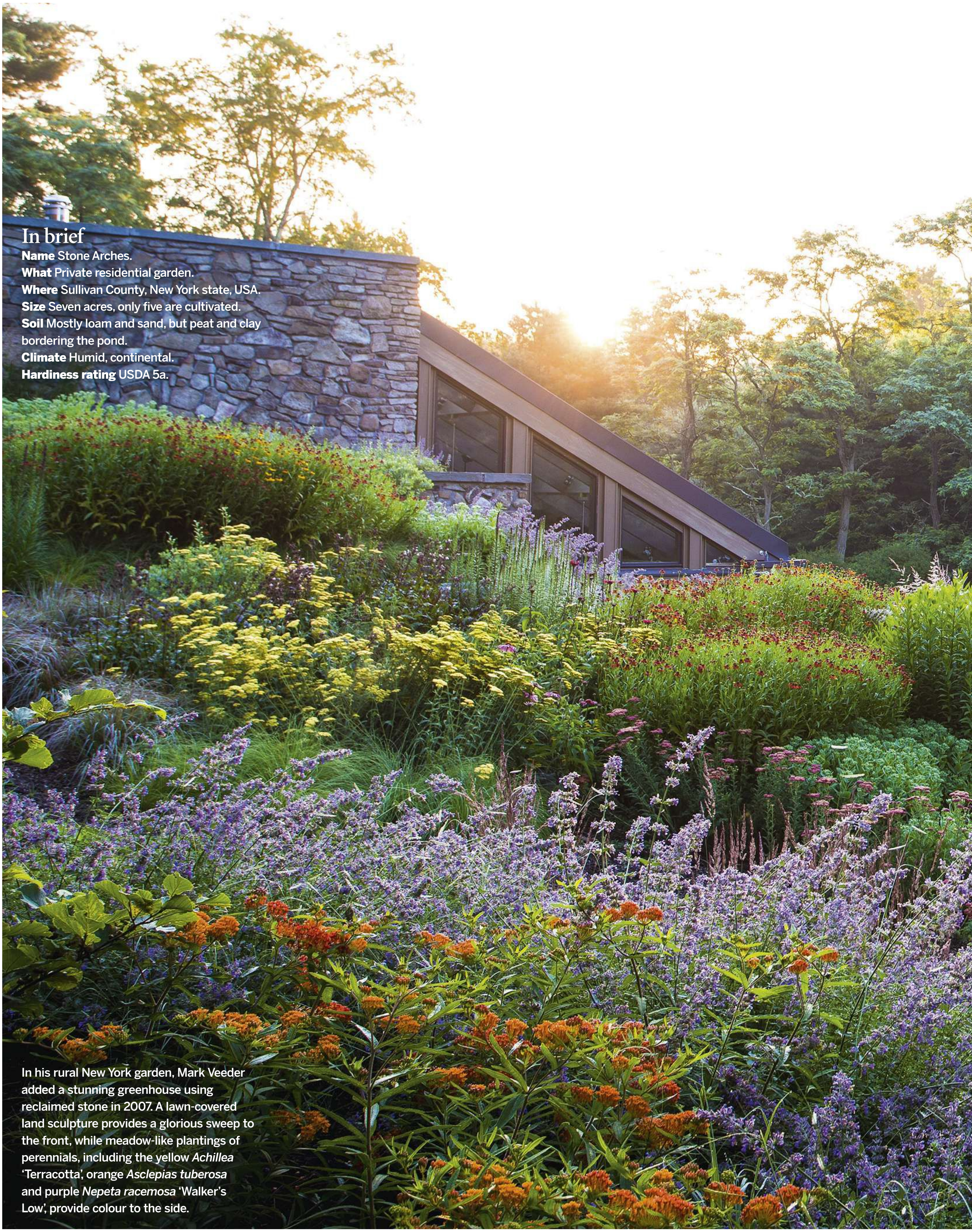
For salad:

- **1 red beetroot, washed and grated**
- **1 golden beetroot (if none available use another red), washed and grated**
- **1 carrot, washed and grated**
- **Salad leaves, including young beetroot leaves**
- **Wild rocket leaves**
- **Chives**
- **White borage flowers**

For dressing:

- **1 good handful of chopped spearmint leaves**
- **1tbsp balsamic vinegar**
- **3tbsp olive oil**
- **Black pepper and salt**

Put all the grated ingredients into a bowl and mix well. Take another bowl and gently mix the washed salad and rocket leaves. Place the mixed grated carrot and beetroot on to the leaves and distribute the chive leaves over the top along with the white borage flowers. Make the salad dressing by putting the balsamic vinegar and the olive oil into a bowl with a good handful of spearmint leaves and, using a hand blender, whizz them together. If you do not have a hand blender, chop the spearmint leaves finely and add them to the vinegar and oil mixture. Add seasoning to taste. Combine with the salad just before serving. Having grown up in a home where my mother had a very productive vegetable garden, grated fresh beetroot salad was something we often had in the summer.



In brief

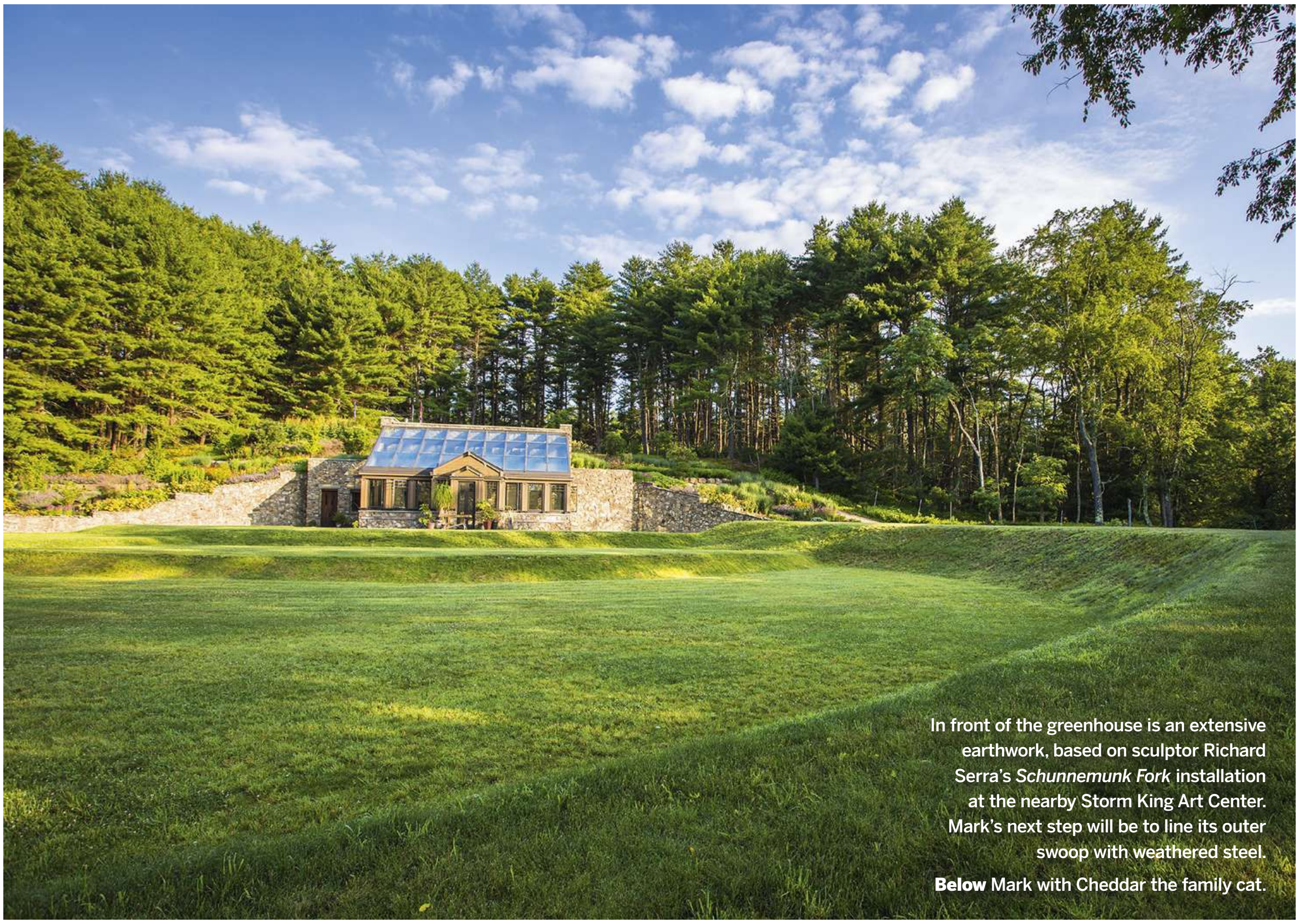
Name Stone Arches.
What Private residential garden.
Where Sullivan County, New York state, USA.
Size Seven acres, only five are cultivated.
Soil Mostly loam and sand, but peat and clay bordering the pond.
Climate Humid, continental.
Hardiness rating USDA 5a.

In his rural New York garden, Mark Veeder added a stunning greenhouse using reclaimed stone in 2007. A lawn-covered land sculpture provides a glorious sweep to the front, while meadow-like plantings of perennials, including the yellow *Achillea* 'Terracotta', orange *Asclepias tuberosa* and purple *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low', provide colour to the side.

Out of the woods

When Mark Veeder discovered a neglected stone house with seven acres of heavily wooded land attached, he threw himself into the new task of creating a stunning garden that mixes woodland with sweeps of meadow planting

WORDS **LISE FUNDERBURG** PHOTOGRAPHS **CLAIRE TAKACS**



In front of the greenhouse is an extensive earthwork, based on sculptor Richard Serra's *Schunnemunk Fork* installation at the nearby Storm King Art Center. Mark's next step will be to line its outer swoop with weathered steel.

Below Mark with Cheddar the family cat.

Where others might have seen a money pit, Mark saw a tarnished gem: the listing included an 1880s stone house, two barns, copses of tall conifers and the remnants of a pond

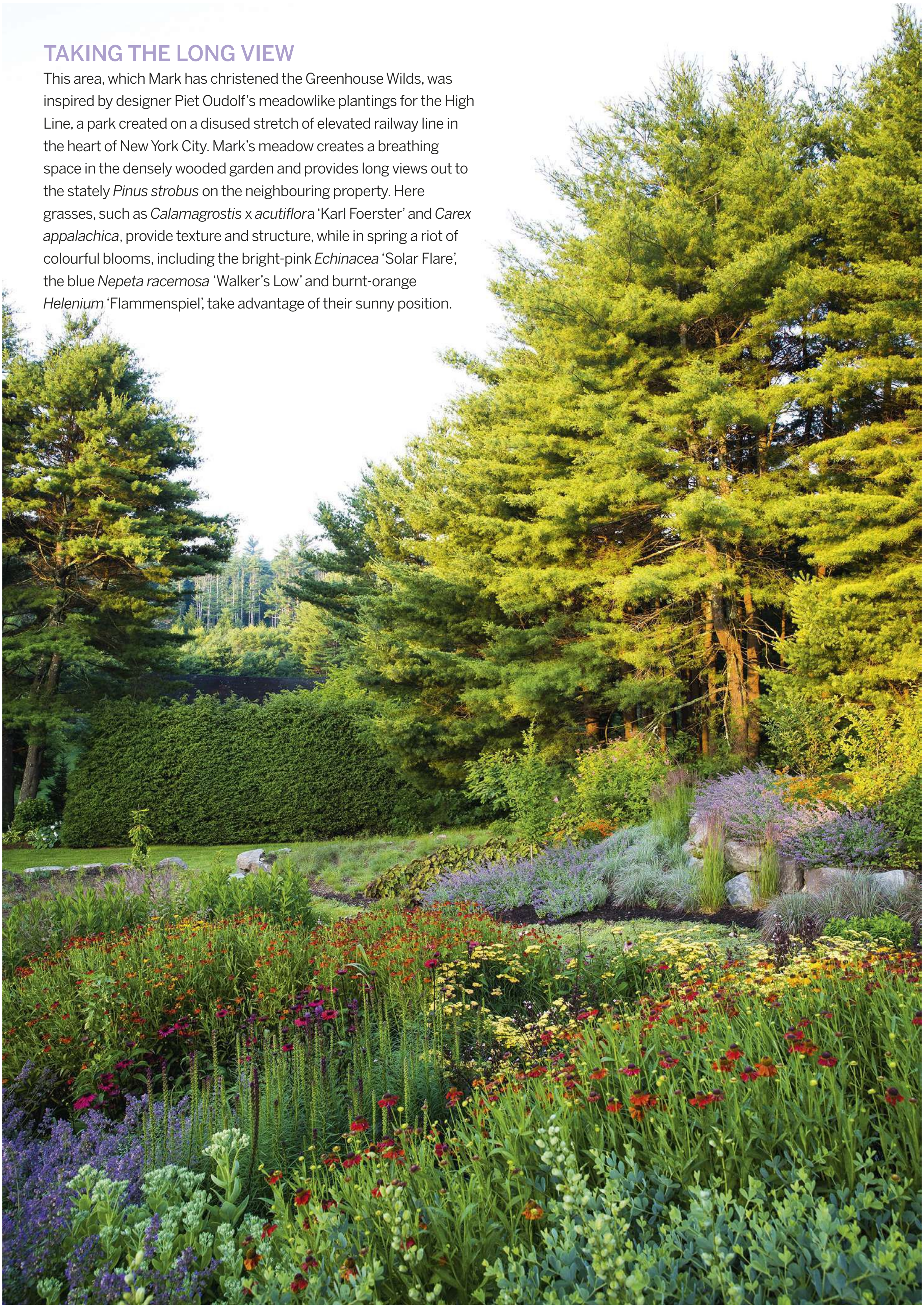
In 1992, when Mark Veeder stumbled across a neglected property for sale, he was unfazed by its condition. Where others might have seen a money pit, the event planner and self-described serial entrepreneur saw a tarnished gem. The rural New York listing included a stone house, two barns, copses of tall conifers that reminded him of the Christmas tree farm his father once ran. The forlorn seven-acre spread, only two hours north of his Manhattan base, proved irresistible. Even before the sale was complete Mark had planted 1,000 daffodil bulbs on its hillside.

"When I first started gardening," Mark recalls, "I wanted everything to be instant." He made the rookie mistake of overplanting, setting himself up for years of thinning and rearranging, and he's had his share of failures. There was that cut leaf beech he wishes he hadn't taken down. But he also did some things right: enriching the soil, attending horticultural workshops with renowned plantsmen and nurserymen, and letting his design evolve over time, organically expanding as his expertise and enthusiasms grew.

Almost 25 years later, the path between the house and barn-turned-guest cottage is lined with a stately woodland garden, its richly textured blanket of giant hostas interwoven with the coarsely toothed leaves of *Rodgersia podophylla* and vigorous spears of *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola', one of the few grasses that can take shade. The pond is edged with plants that thrive in the clay-rich peat of its banks, including *Geranium macrorrhizum*, *Vancouveria hexandra*, *Asarum canadense* and *Polygonatum humile*. Three species of magnolia perfume the spring air, and ever-spreading runs of *Paeonia suffruticosa* and *Arisaema sikokianum* belie their reputations as fussy growers. Between the pond and the guest house, an offshoot grouping of dwarf trees suggests a sculpture park; each specimen given room to show off its particular talents. The upper gardens are all drama, with an undulating landform sitting at the foot of a handsome greenhouse Mark built in 2007. Lodged in the side of a hill, the greenhouse is draped in a shrug of grasses and meadow plants, including asclepias, baptisia, aster, yarrow and the flowering, blue-eyed grass Mark remembers picking for his mother when he was a child.

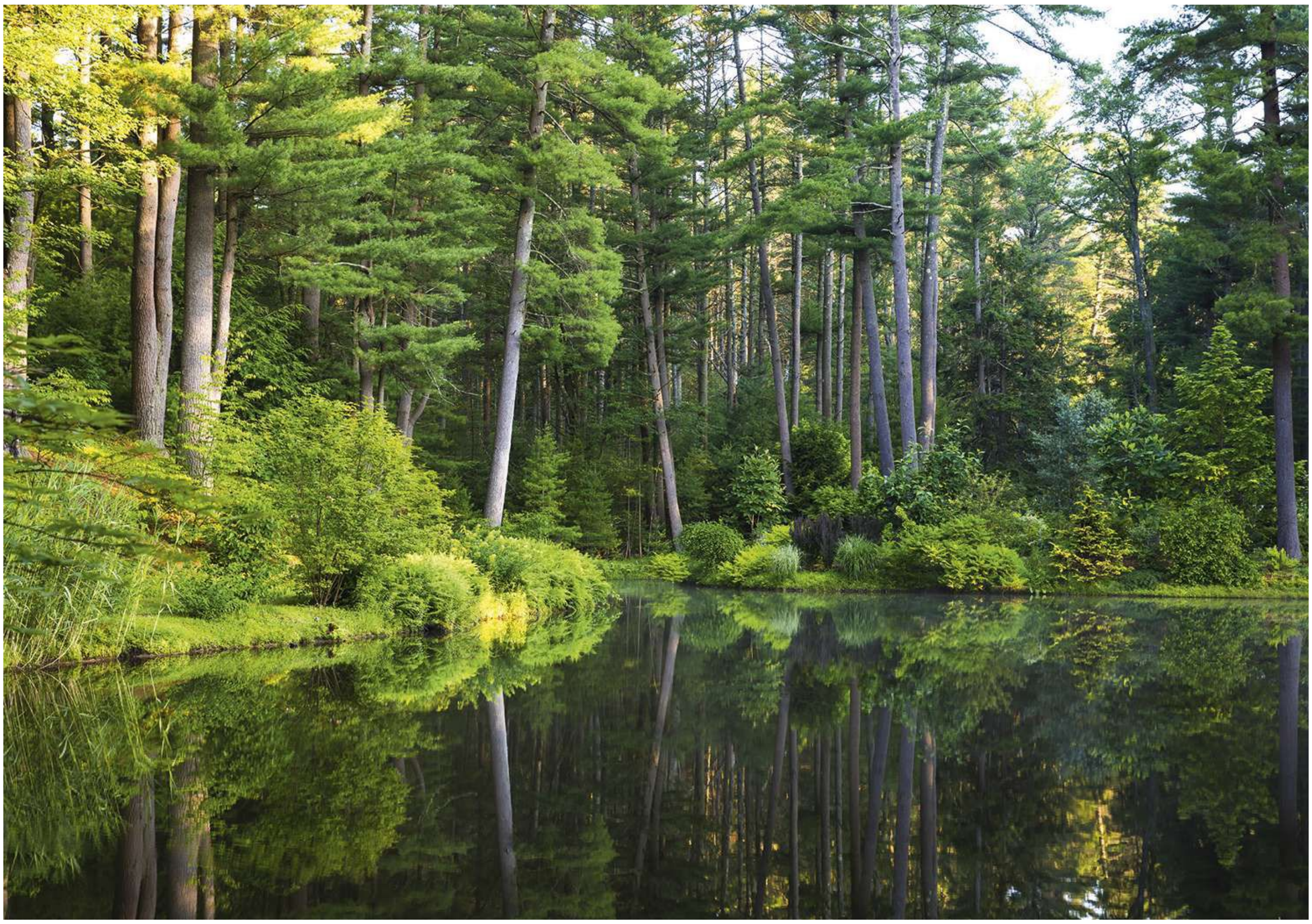
Mark can rattle off his sources of inspiration, from the gardens of Great Dixter to plantsman Dan Hinkley and the Canadian

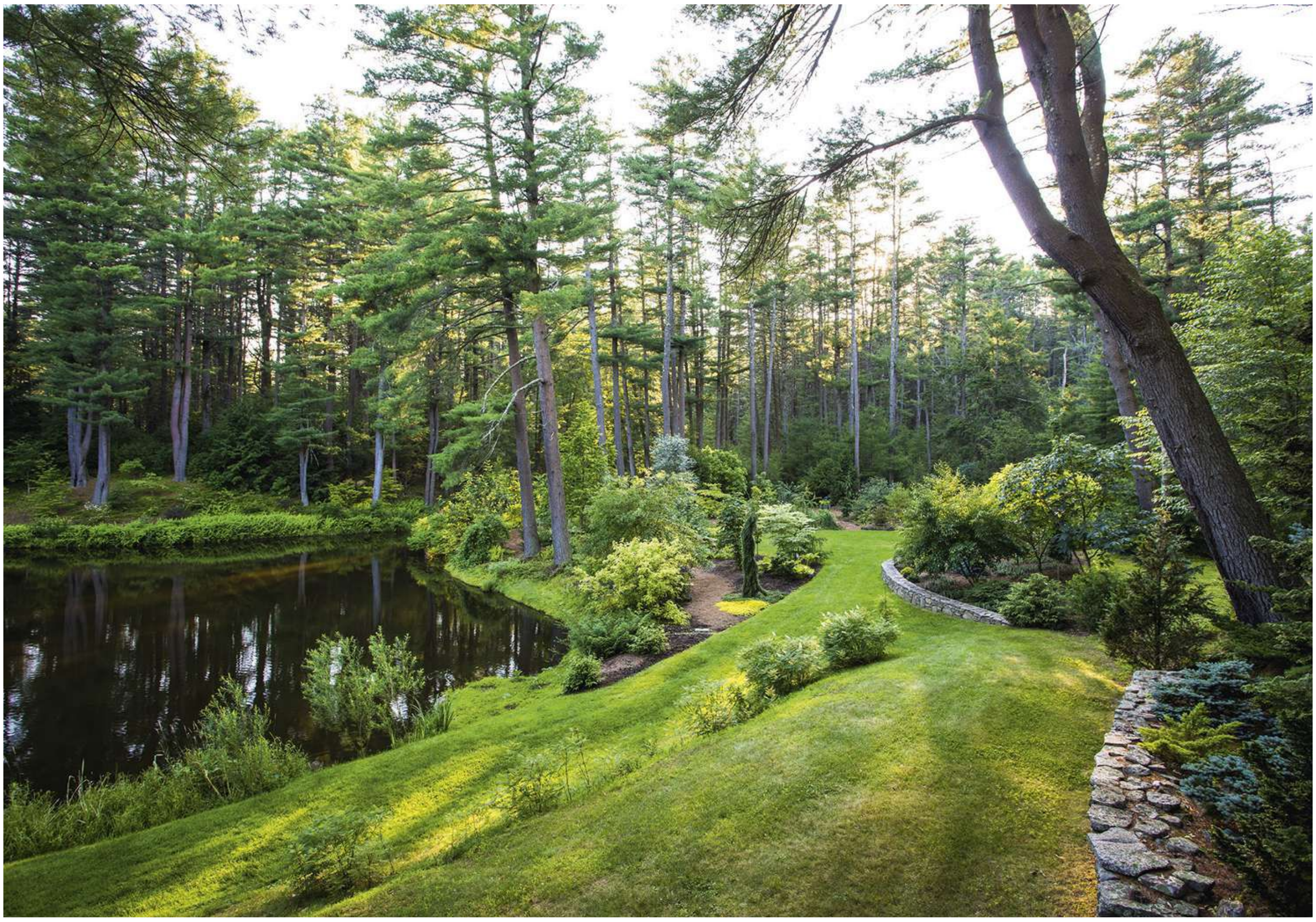
Continued on page 98 ▷

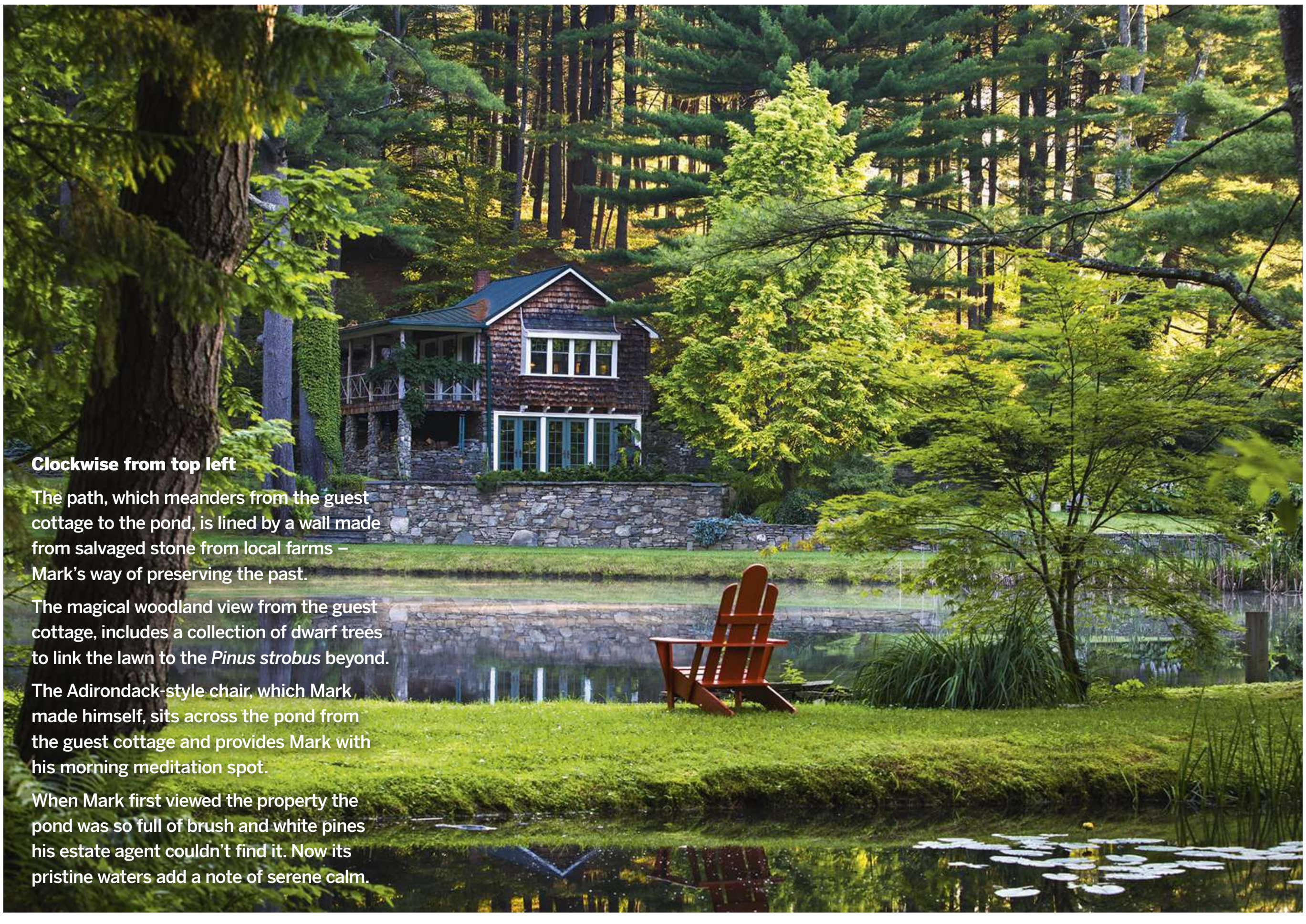


TAKING THE LONG VIEW

This area, which Mark has christened the Greenhouse Wilds, was inspired by designer Piet Oudolf's meadowlike plantings for the High Line, a park created on a disused stretch of elevated railway line in the heart of New York City. Mark's meadow creates a breathing space in the densely wooded garden and provides long views out to the stately *Pinus strobus* on the neighbouring property. Here grasses, such as *Calamagrostis* x *acutiflora* 'Karl Foerster' and *Carex appalachica*, provide texture and structure, while in spring a riot of colourful blooms, including the bright-pink *Echinacea* 'Solar Flare', the blue *Nepeta racemosa* 'Walker's Low' and burnt-orange *Helenium* 'Flammenspiel', take advantage of their sunny position.







Clockwise from top left

The path, which meanders from the guest cottage to the pond, is lined by a wall made from salvaged stone from local farms – Mark's way of preserving the past.

The magical woodland view from the guest cottage, includes a collection of dwarf trees to link the lawn to the *Pinus strobus* beyond.

The Adirondack-style chair, which Mark made himself, sits across the pond from the guest cottage and provides Mark with his morning meditation spot.

When Mark first viewed the property the pond was so full of brush and white pines his estate agent couldn't find it. Now its pristine waters add a note of serene calm.

Thyme growing between the flagstones creates a scented terrace overlooking the pond. Buffering its edge is a cluster of low-growing box and a sweep of *Hakonechloa macra* 'Aureola'.

Below Still operable, the vintage Ford pickup truck also functions as sculpture.

Although Mark now has help with mowing lawns and tasks that involve the use of heavy equipment, the garden planning remains a one-man show, a chance for him to express himself artistically and to slow life down

▷ nurseryman and author Thomas Hobbs. He is a fan of the garden-loving writer Jamaica Kincaid and interplanting genius Piet Oudolf. Mark's greenhouse meadow is a tribute to Oudolf's planting for Manhattan's High Line, and his landform was spurred by the work of sculptor Richard Serra. At the same time, Mark's own aesthetic is an unmistakable through-line, from the controlled informality of plantings to the privileging of leaf over bloom – the leaves' shapes, sizes and colour variegation adding interest long before and after flowers have come and gone.

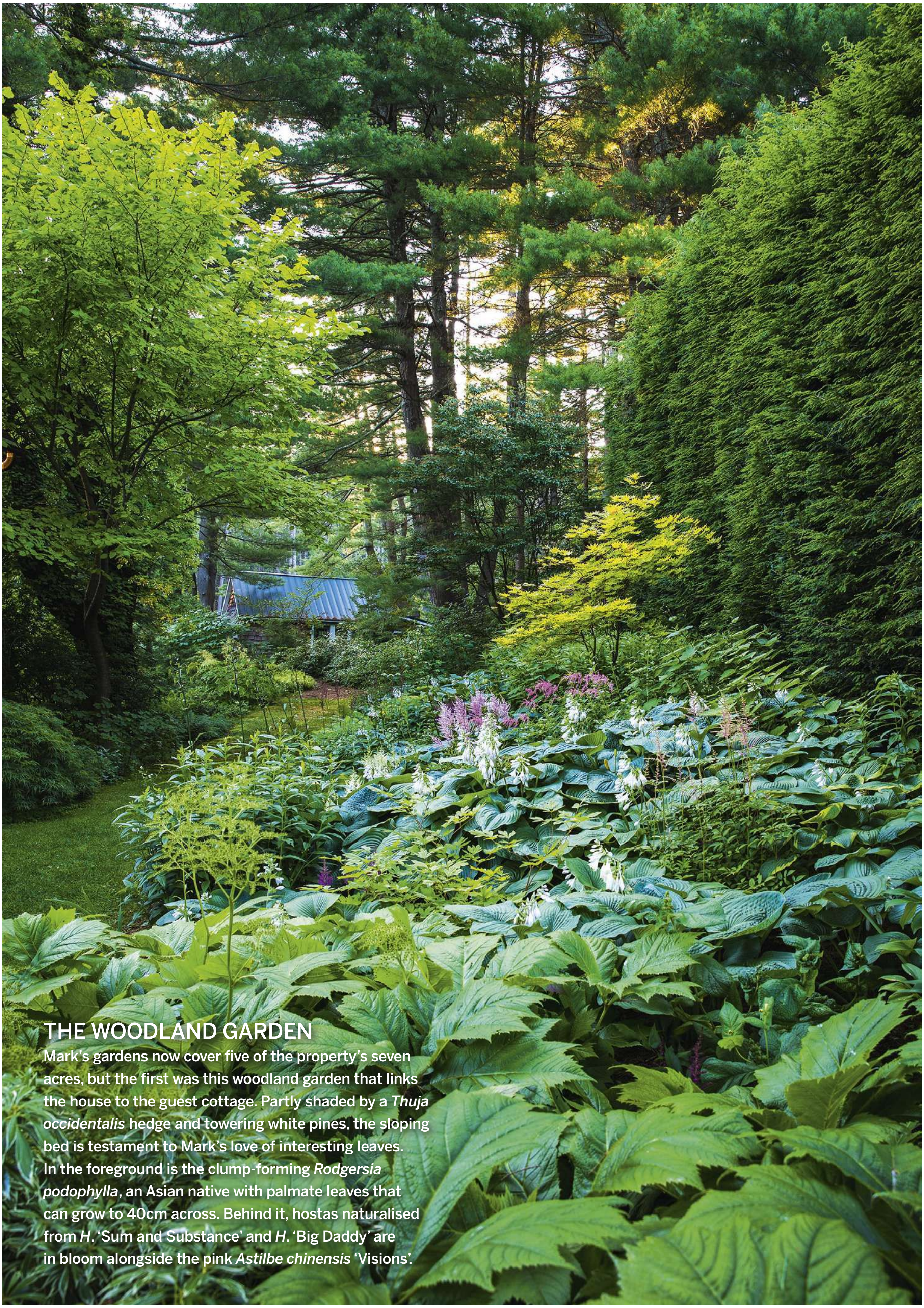
Although Mark now has help with mowing the lawns and tasks that involve the use of heavy equipment, the garden planning remains a one-man show, a chance for him to express himself artistically and to slow life down. He periodically brings in two helpers, women who work for botanical gardens in New York City. They come up for a few days, stay in the guest cottage, and Mark bounces his ideas off them while they deadhead, prune and mount an ongoing campaign against the plume poppies that once seemed like such a good idea.

The help has become increasingly necessary since the arrival of Farmacy, a skincare company Mark launched in January 2014 after discovering and patenting a green-flowering form of *Echinacea purpurea* – *Echinacea* 'Green Envy' – which contains high levels of cichoric acid, a compound that has been credited as an anti-oxidant and anti-inflammatory, and which is now extracted and used as a Farmacy ingredient. On the heels of Farmacy came another life change when Mark and his partner, the country singer Cooper Boone, became parents to twin girls in August 2014.

Life is busier now, Mark says, but richer. When his daughters were younger he used to park their stroller in paths while he weeded, but now they're walking, he's plotted out a grass maze in which they can wander. Meanwhile, Mark and the girls still take morning and evening walks together. "As we go," says Mark, "I explain the plants and discuss my thoughts of what is working and not working as well as my future dreams. I am much more in touch with the garden now than I've ever been." □

USEFUL INFORMATION

Find out more about Mark's Farmacy range at **farmacybeauty.com**



THE WOODLAND GARDEN

Mark's gardens now cover five of the property's seven acres, but the first was this woodland garden that links the house to the guest cottage. Partly shaded by a *Thuja occidentalis* hedge and towering white pines, the sloping bed is testament to Mark's love of interesting leaves. In the foreground is the clump-forming *Rodgersia podophylla*, an Asian native with palmate leaves that can grow to 40cm across. Behind it, hostas naturalised from *H.* 'Sum and Substance' and *H.* 'Big Daddy' are in bloom alongside the pink *Astilbe chinensis* 'Visions'.

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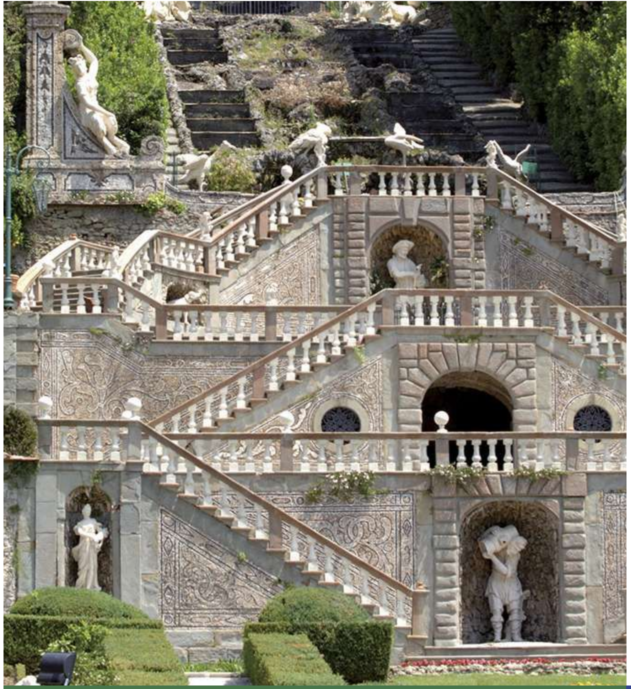

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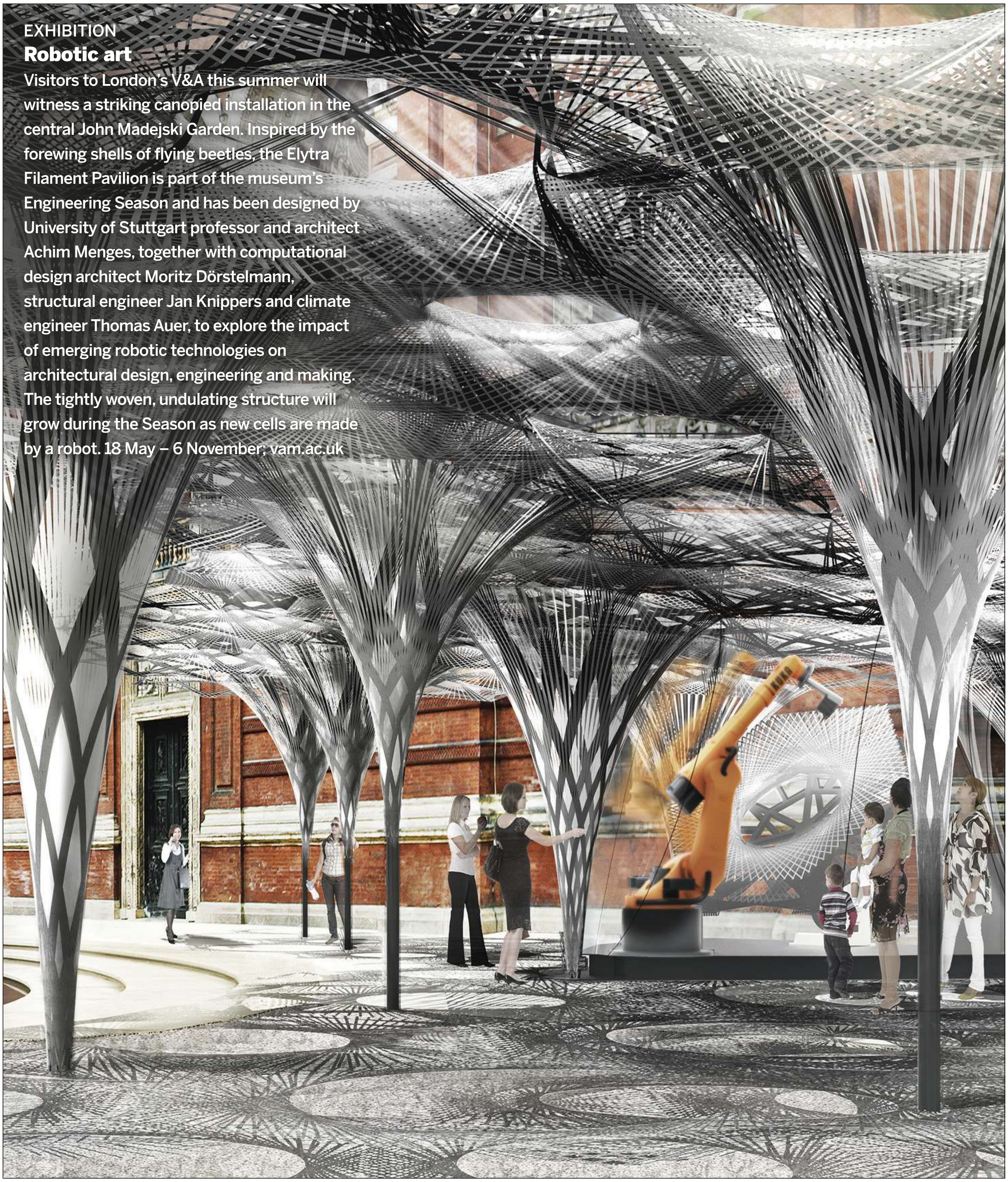
EXHIBITION

Robotic art

Visitors to London's V&A this summer will witness a striking canopied installation in the central John Madejski Garden. Inspired by the forewing shells of flying beetles, the Elytra Filament Pavilion is part of the museum's Engineering Season and has been designed by University of Stuttgart professor and architect Achim Menges, together with computational design architect Moritz Dörstelmann, structural engineer Jan Knippers and climate engineer Thomas Auer, to explore the impact of emerging robotic technologies on architectural design, engineering and making. The tightly woven, undulating structure will grow during the Season as new cells are made by a robot. 18 May – 6 November; vam.ac.uk



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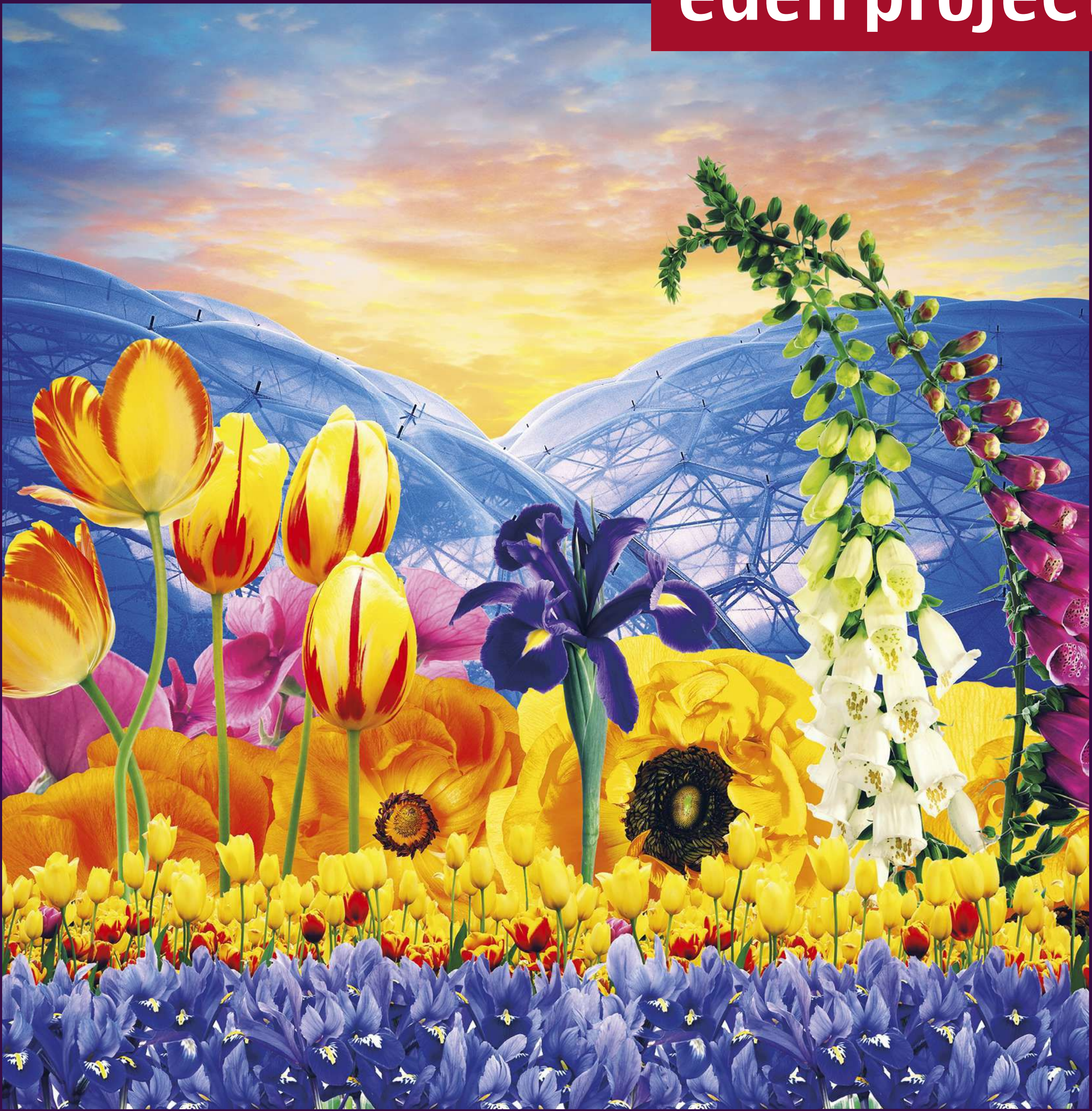

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APL AWARDS

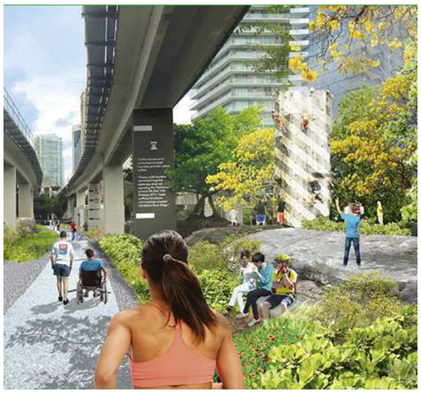
Neat solution

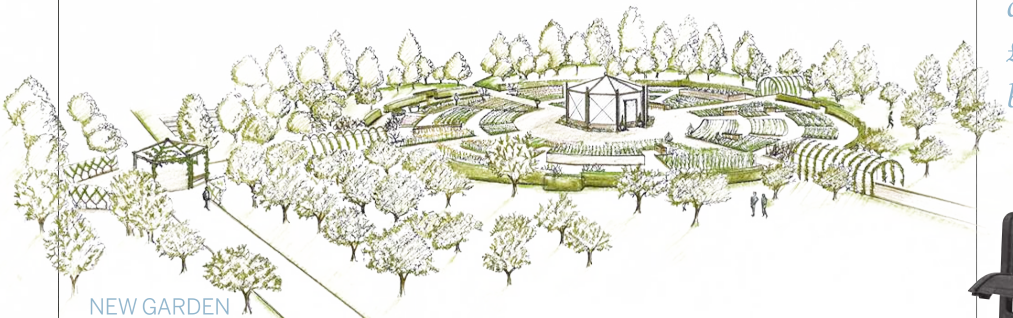
Sussex-based Frogheath Landscapes was named Supreme Winner at the Association of Professional Landscapers Awards 2016 for its work on the gardens of a 16th-century barn in Sussex's Brede Valley. Landscaping included a formal lawn, punctuated with clipped *Quercus ilex*; a walled potager, with contemporary fruit arbour; an orchard, underplanted with a wild-flower meadow, and rustic raised beds. **frogheath.co.uk**

URBAN PARK

Take the low road

The masterplan for The Underline, a ten-mile linear park and urban trail beneath Miami's Metrorail, has been completed by James Corner Field Operations. The pedestrian and cycle trail will create over 100 acres of restored natural habitats and provide a canvas for public art. It is being built in phases, starting at Brickell, the city's most densely populated area, with the least amount of green space. **theunderline.org**





NEW GARDEN

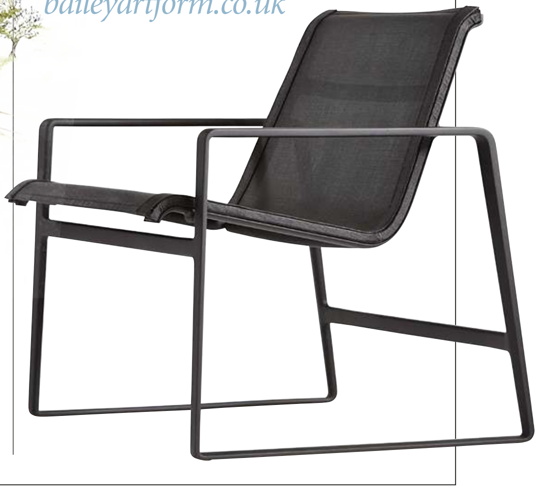
Global gourmets

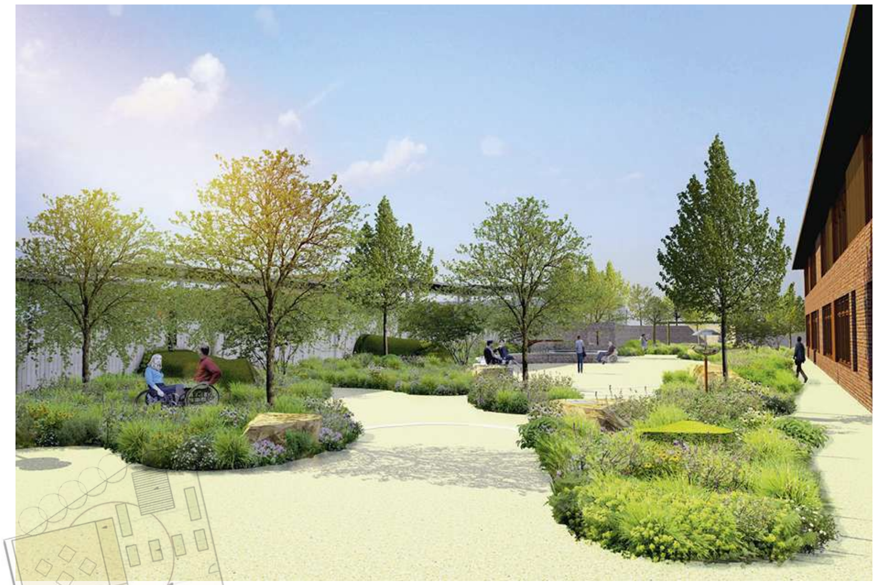
Work has started on a new edible garden, designed by Xa Tollemache, at RHS Garden Hyde Hall in Essex. The circular design, which employs hedging, trees and shrubs as structural elements, wraps round a bespoke octagonal glasshouse by Hartley Botanic. A wide range of edible plants, including ornamentals from around the world, will be grown in four sections representing Europe and the Middle East, Asia, North and Central America, and South America. The garden is expected to be finished by summer 2017.

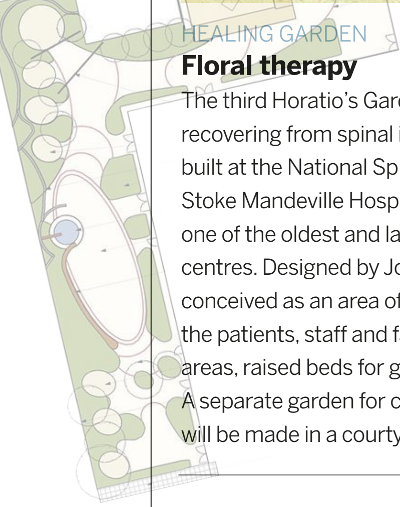
RHS / XA TOLLEMACHE

SITTING PRETTY

A new line of elegant, cast aluminium, outdoor furniture, designed by US landscape architect Andrea Cochran, has just been launched in the UK. With clean lines and weatherproof mesh seating, the lounge chair comes in a range of colours. £1,446 (plus shipping costs); baileyartform.co.uk



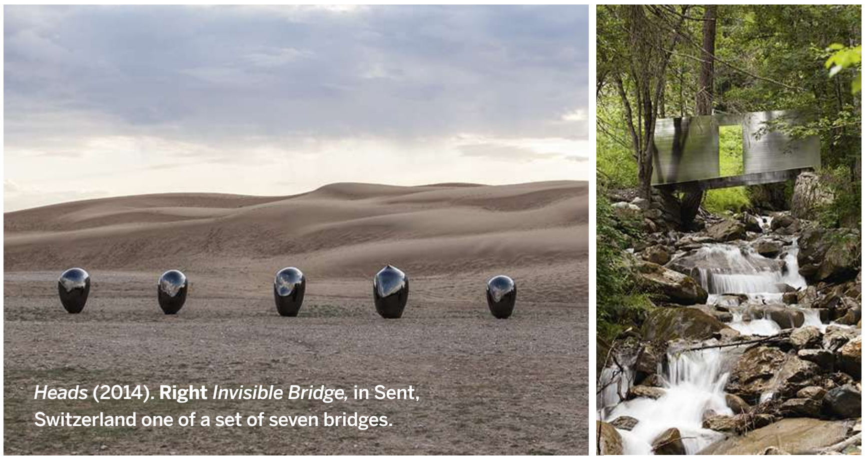




HEALING GARDEN

Floral therapy

The third Horatio's Garden, for patients recovering from spinal injuries, is to be built at the National Spinal Injuries Centre at Stoke Mandeville Hospital, Buckinghamshire, one of the oldest and largest spinal injury centres. Designed by Joe Swift, the garden is conceived as an area of calm and beauty for the patients, staff and families at this busy hospital, with a water feature, secluded areas, raised beds for garden therapy, and a garden room designed by Simon Foote. A separate garden for children, with brightly painted walls and a central water feature, will be made in a courtyard off the children's ward. **horatiosgarden.org.uk**



Heads (2014). **Right** *Invisible Bridge*, in Sent, Switzerland one of a set of seven bridges.

EXHIBITION

Material world

Swiss sculptor Not Vital's first major exhibition in the UK opens this month at Yorkshire Sculpture Park. The artist, who works in a range of different materials, from steel, glass and silver to paper, often references nature in his work. His 2008 piece *Let One Hundred Flowers Bloom*, a collection of 100 lotus buds on long stems, will stretch the length of the 18th-century Terrace, while his 2014 work *Heads* (above) will be seen against a dark-green yew hedge. An stainless steel bridge, from the same series as the bridge (shown above) near his Swiss home, will become a permanent sculpture in the woodland around Upper Lake. 21 May – 2 January 2017, Yorkshire Sculpture Park. **Tel 01924 832631; ysp.co.uk**

Notebook

- **Celebrating Art in the Garden**, the contemporary sculpture exhibition, returns to the five-acre walled garden at West Lavington Manor, Wiltshire. Participating artists include Heather Jansch and Simon Hempsell, 26 May – 12 June, see website for dates and times; friendsofthegarden.org.uk
- The **Freising International Garden Fair** celebrates its 20th anniversary this month, with more than 60 nurseries showing a wide range of rare and special plants in Freising, Germany. A lecture programme on the gardens of Russia includes talks by historian Dr Anna Ananieva and landscape designer Dr Elena Doubnova. 6-8 May, freisingergartentage.de
- ***Plant Selection, Learning from Nature*** by Noël Kingsbury, the first in a new series of e-books, is available to download from amazon.co.uk for £9.95. Published by MyGardenSchool, it looks at planting design in parks, gardens and other designed landscapes that take plant ecology as their starting point.
- **Hall Place and Gardens** in Bexley, Kent, hosts two garden-related exhibitions this summer. *How Does Your Garden Grow?* – a Garden Museum exhibition – will celebrate the history of gardeners and their gardens, while *Bud to Bloom* will showcase works from the Crafts Council's collection of contemporary craft works inspired by plants and the natural world. Until 4 September. Tel 01322 526574, hallplace.org.uk
- Harrods is celebrating the Chelsea Flower Show with a month-long **Heath Robinson exhibition** (4-29 May) and **Floral Afternoon Teas** with talks about the show by Diarmuid Gavin, Helen Dillon and Mark Gregory. For more information, call 020 7225 6800 or email reservations@harrods.com

HEADS (2014) IMAGE COURTESY OF YSP © ERIC GREGORY POWELL

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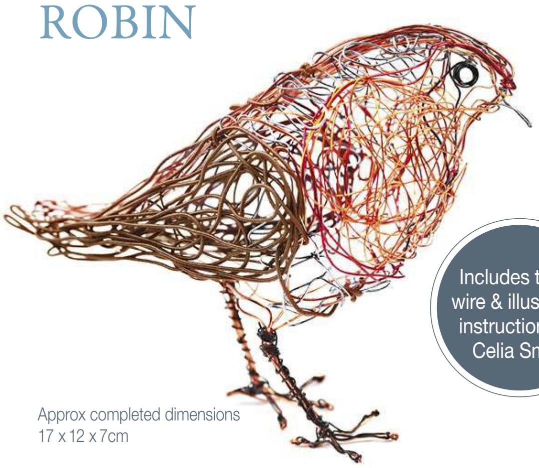

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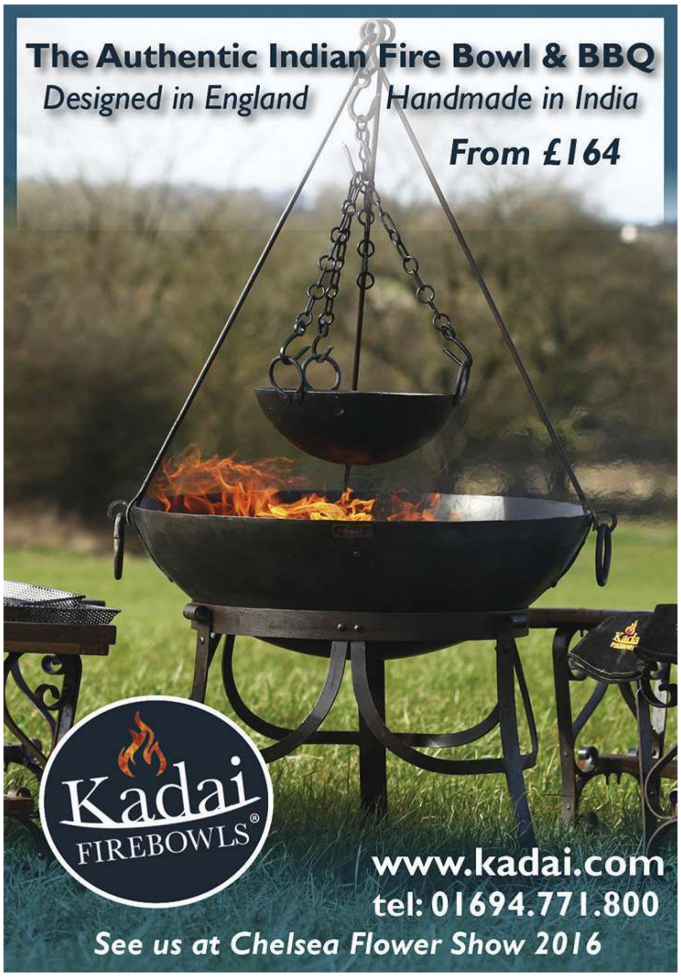

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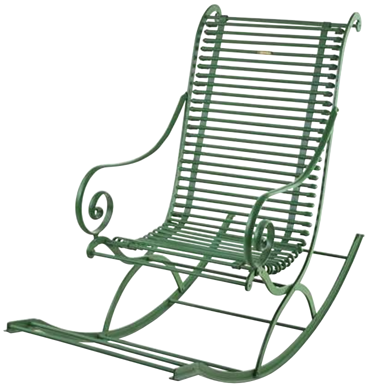

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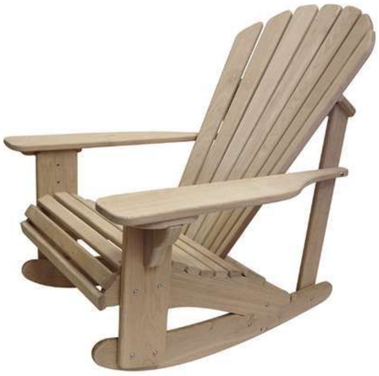

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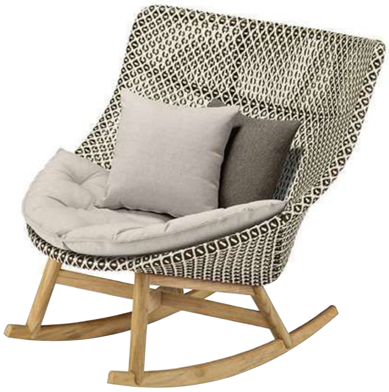

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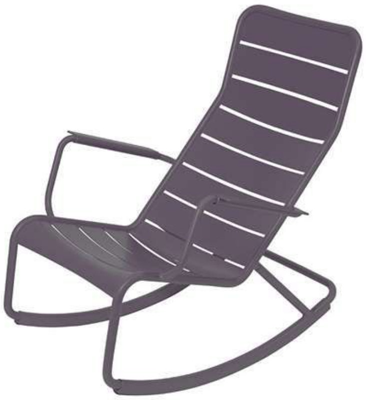

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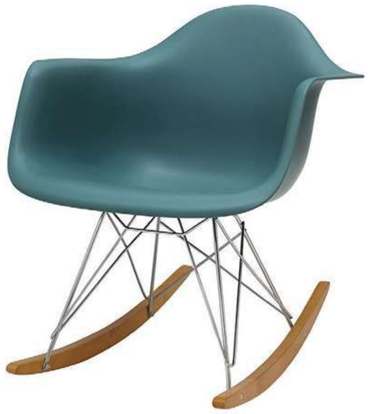
Fermob Luxembourg Rocking Chair in plum,
£485, Le Petit Jardin,
01892 541152, le-petit-jardin.com



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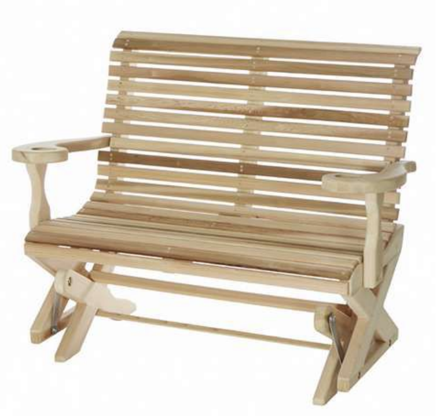
Eames RAR Chair in ocean blue,
£449, The Conran Shop,
0844 848 4000, conranshop.co.uk



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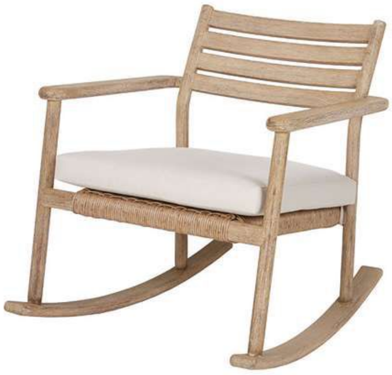
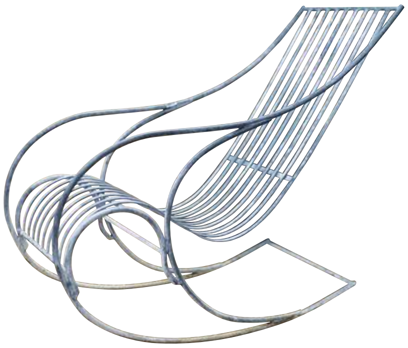


UNDERSTATED

Croft Collection Islay Rocking Chair,
£399, John Lewis,
03456 049049, johnlewis.com



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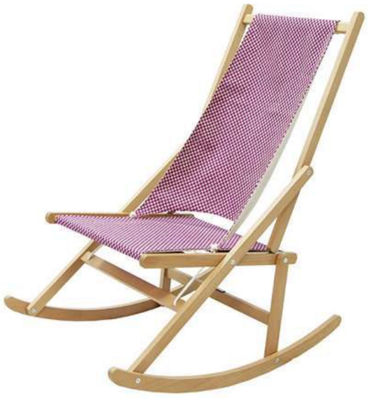
Metal Rocking Chair,
£650, Petersham Nurseries,
020 8940 5230, petershamnurseries.com



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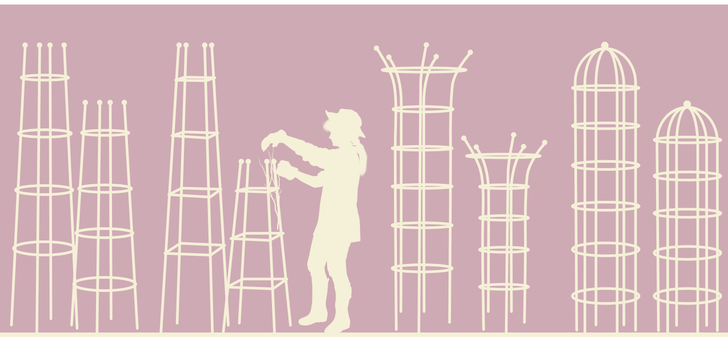

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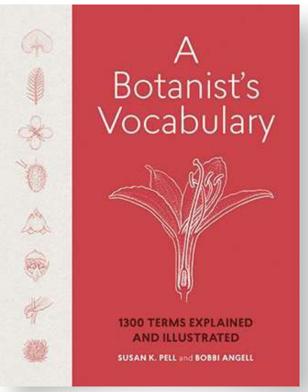
A Botanist's Vocabulary
1300 TERMS EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED
SUSAN K. PELL and BOBBI ANGELL

A BOTANIST'S VOCABULARY: 1300 TERMS EXPLAINED AND ILLUSTRATED
by Susan K Pell and
Bobbi Angell

Timber Press, £17.99
ISBN 978-1604695632

An invaluable aid for budding botanists, with a concise glossary of botanical terms and clear, line-drawing illustrations.

Reviewer Rory Dusoir is a Kew-trained gardener and writer.

One of the most challenging aspects in the multi-disciplined profession of horticulture is the question of plant identification. As gardeners, we can only hope to dabble in botany, which bestrides several fields of biology and chemistry in its own right.

We are all probably familiar with that sinking feeling when a plant whose name we have just learned to grasp gets shunted into a new genus (I will forever struggle to refer to *Dicentra spectabilis* as *Lamprocapnos*); but our disappointment must be tempered by knowing the scientists are ultimately building upon centuries of effort towards greater clarity and accuracy of plant classification. Learning how to identify plants correctly is hard and we shouldn't expect it to be otherwise.

A Botanist's Vocabulary is a supportive book for those wishing to get to grips with plant morphology, or the external structure of plants. Plant systematics (the science of classifying plants) was at one time based exclusively on the study of morphology; although recently anatomy and genetics have become increasingly important tools for determining how plants are classified, the study of morphology will forever be vital to those who work in the field, whether horticulturists or naturalists.

Botanical terms probably have more capacity to alienate the casually interested than do the Latin plant names themselves. On opening this book you will find the definition of achene as 'indehiscent fruit derived from a unicarpellate pistil' and your head may spin – but persist and you'll find each term is clearly explained.

Bobbi Angell's incisive illustrations not only show the botanical structures clearly, but the plant subjects are carefully chosen to be recognisable to many; their familiarity is comforting in an otherwise bewildering subject.

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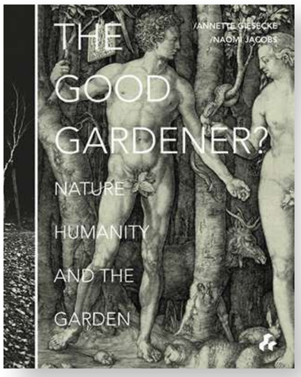
RRP £17.99. **Reader offer price £15.99** including p&p*.



THE GOOD GARDENER?
by Annette Giesecke and
Naomi Jacobs

Artifice Books on Architecture,
£24.95
ISBN 978-1908967459

A collection of 19 essays that explore our impulse to manipulate the natural environment and create garden spaces.

Reviewer Noël Kingsbury is a writer and plantsman.

Books that relate gardening to a wider intellectual world are few and far between. But this is one such book and a good one at that. Among the subjects covered is the relationship between gardens and political power, 'digging for victory' in wartime USA, the British kitchen garden as a recreation of the Garden of Eden, guerrilla gardening, gardens in the work of the novelist Margaret Atwood and the mythico-magical-botanical paradise of Mount Stewart in Northern Ireland. There is a short essay by Emma Marris, whose *Rambunctious Garden: Saving Nature in a Post-Wild World* is one of the best books on ecology I have read in ages; her essay makes the point, never quite made in her book, that we humans are now effectively gardening the planet.

Like all collections of essays, the quality is variable; and there is only the most minimal sense of a theme. More seriously, the authors are nearly all American academics, and in some cases seem to have only a hazy idea of what a garden actually is. Around a quarter of the content actually has very little to do with the garden, however, this in no way reduces how interesting it is and thankfully the writing is mostly clear and free of jargon. The only non-American author is the English philosopher and gardener David Cooper whose essay on East Asian gardens is a valuable contribution to a deeper understanding of this most important tradition. Rick Darke is the only name from the garden and landscape world, and his contribution, eloquently illustrated, is one of those that relates rather more to the wider landscape rather than the garden.

The illustrations are worth a special mention: richly varied, attractive and often idiosyncratic, they greatly enhance an important publication that deserves to get a wide distribution.

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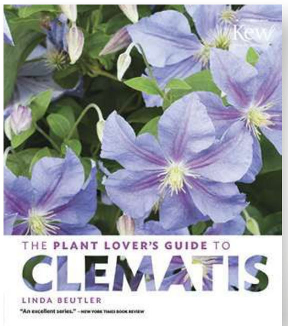
Book reviews



THE PLANT LOVER'S GUIDE TO CLEMATIS

by Linda Beutler

Timber Press, £17.99
ISBN 978-1604696592

The latest in a series of illustrated, informative guides – in this case for those who have a passion for growing clematis.

Reviewer John Hoyland is a writer and plantsman.

This is the latest addition to *The Plant Lover's Guide* series from Timber Press. Each book in the series is written by an expert on the genus, beautifully illustrated and full of sound advice. This volume is no exception.

Written by Linda Beutler, the current president of the International Clematis Society, the book covers in detail how best to cultivate, propagate and prune clematis. In addition it gives extensive suggestions on using them in the garden and containers.

The section on growing clematis in containers has useful lists of those cultivars that thrive in pots and troughs. Beutler is a former florist and gives interesting tips on using clematis as a cut flower, something that is common in Japan and parts of East Asia but is rarely seen in Britain.

Clematis species and the main groups of the genus are described in an easily understood way that will appeal to the general gardener.

The bulk of the book is a directory of 196 of the author's favourite clematis, a broad range that covers old varieties, modern cultivars, herbaceous forms and species.

The author explains each plant's history, how to cultivate it and offers ideas about how to use it in the garden, and which other plants it looks good with. The directory is divided into two parts: large-flowered hybrids and the rest. Half of the clematis featured in the book are large-flowered hybrids. This may be a reflection of the author's personal interests but this division is of limited use to readers who want help in selecting, say, a herbaceous clematis or a form of *Clematis viticella*.

As with the rest of this series, the book is extensively illustrated with clear plant portraits, many of which were taken by the author.

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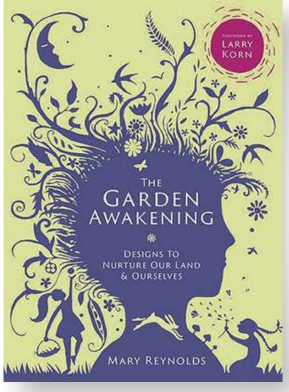

THE GARDEN AWAKENING: DESIGNS TO NURTURE OUR LAND & OURSELVES

by Mary Reynolds

Green Books, £19.99
ISBN 978-0857843135

A plea to design, garden and live with nature rather than work against it, by an award-winning Chelsea designer.

Reviewer Caroline Beck is a garden writer and flower grower.

At the 2002 RHS Chelsea Flower Show, Mary Reynolds, a young Irish garden designer, defiantly threw out the rule book and made A Celtic Sanctuary, a wild garden full of symbolism and imagery of her native Ireland, for which she won a gold medal. This book distills her philosophy about how gardens should connect land to people, and at its core is a psychological anxiety that stretches back to the 18th century, when unease about the maltreatment of nature first started to be expressed, and which found its voice in the environmental movement of the 1960s. How you feel about this book will probably depend on the extent to which you too share those anxieties.

The talk about 'energy' and 'healing' in the first section entitled Restoring Wellness presupposes the questionable view that we've all entirely lost connection with the land, and ourselves. Redemption comes in many forms, some more credible than others, with everything from exorcising magical 'land curses' to Forest Gardening and Biodynamics thrown in. Much of her advice is based on the sound principles of permaculture, but by blurring it with anecdotes, such as recounting revelatory dreams about crows and using crystals to embed your 'intentions into the land', she weakens her credibility and her argument.

Even though it felt a bit too *Celtic Twilight* for me, with an over-emphasis on quasi-mystical feeling rather than patient observation and dirty hands, I agree with almost everything Mary Reynolds advocates. For those new to gardening, and especially those interested in the environment, she provides much food for thought about how we can co-exist with the natural world, and for that I applaud her. I just wish she'd been less high-priestess about it.

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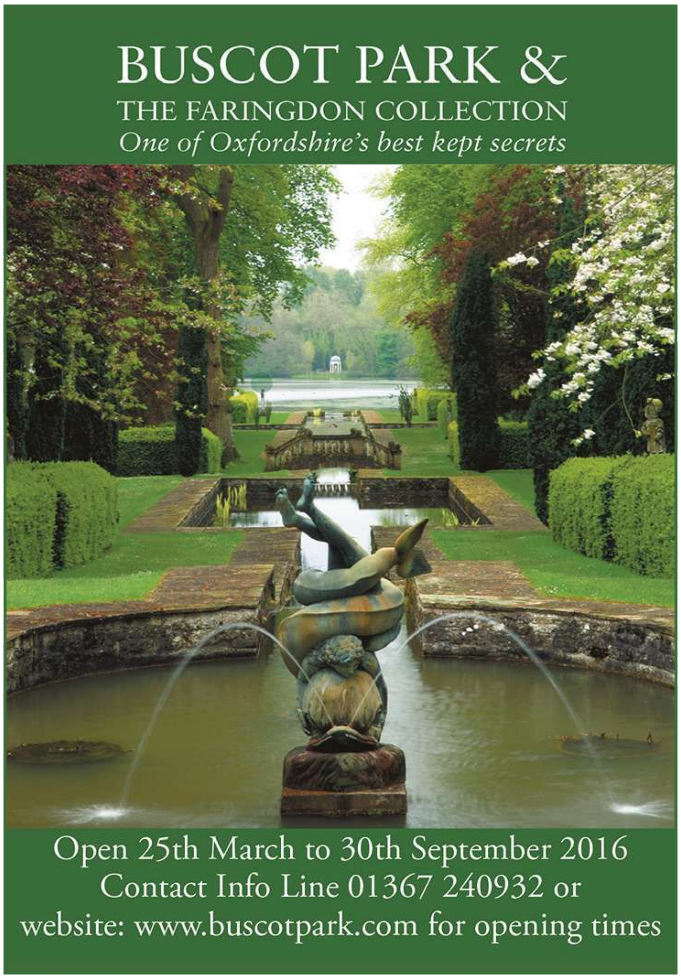

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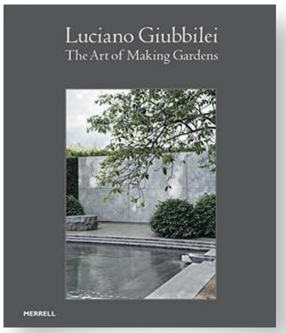


THE ART OF MAKING A GARDEN
by Luciano Giubbilei

Merrell, £45
ISBN 978-1858946467

A sumptuously photographed and impeccably produced book that offers insights into an award-winning designer's work.

Reviewer Tim Richardson is a garden critic and regular columnist.

This book essentially describes a learning curve: a period when Luciano Giubbilei's work has been moving away from the clean-lined modernism of his Italian inheritance, and into the tangled web of English herbaceous-perennial design. Given the soulful tone of the book, it is almost as if he is seeking absolution from the sins of his previous incarnation, as a designer of chic outdoor living spaces for the super rich.

It's an evolution that is reflected in the choice of foreword writers: Sir Paul Smith and Fergus Garrett. The fashion designer turned Giubbilei on to the shabby chic aesthetic, while head gardener Garrett responded to an out-of-the-blue request from Giubbilei and welcomed him to the horticultural ashram that is Great Dixter, setting aside a border especially for Giubbilei to experiment with plantings.

This is a gentle book that reflects Giubbilei's genuine humility and willingness to learn, with Garrett playing the role of his guru. It is part love letter to the English horticultural tradition and part meditation on what makes Giubbilei tick as a designer.

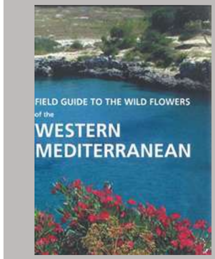
As such, the book is something of an eclectic mix with numerous authors offering their views on a wide variety of topics, from basket-weaving to the use of water; from 'simplicity' to 'texture'. These important topics are treated with a brevity that is not always reassuring, and the multiplicity of voices can be a little confusing. The book, which is beautifully photographed and impeccably produced, with huge pictures of Dixter's plantings and portraits of Giubbilei, will be a must-have for fans of the designer and Dixter alike.

- **Don't miss the chance to hear Luciano Giubbilei and Sir Paul Smith in conversation at the *Gardens Illustrated* Talk. See page 9 for details.**

Book offer
RRP £45. **Reader offer price £39** including p&p*.

Other books

From 'Capability' Brown's vast parklands to tiny city plots, this month's books offer something for every garden lover



A FIELD GUIDE TO THE WILD FLOWERS OF THE WESTERN MEDITERRANEAN
by Chris Thorogood
Kew Publishing, £40
ISBN 978-1842466162
A comprehensive plant-identification guide to Mediterranean flora.

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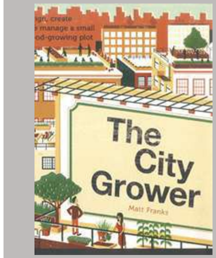

THE CITY GROWER
by Matt Franks
Kyle Books, £16.99
ISBN 978-0857833044
Matt Franks's easy-to-follow, five-step plan for transforming your small city space into an eco-friendly, green oasis.

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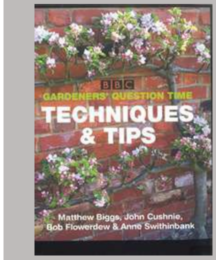
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Matthew Biggs, John Cushnie, Bob Flowerdew & Anne Swithinbank

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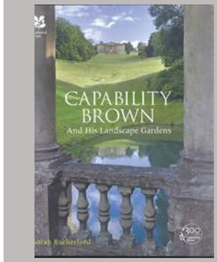

CAPABILITY BROWN AND HIS LANDSCAPE GARDENS
by Sarah Rutherford
National Trust Books, £20
ISBN 978-1909881549
Lancelot 'Capability' Brown's story told in an illustrated guide to his most iconic landscapes.

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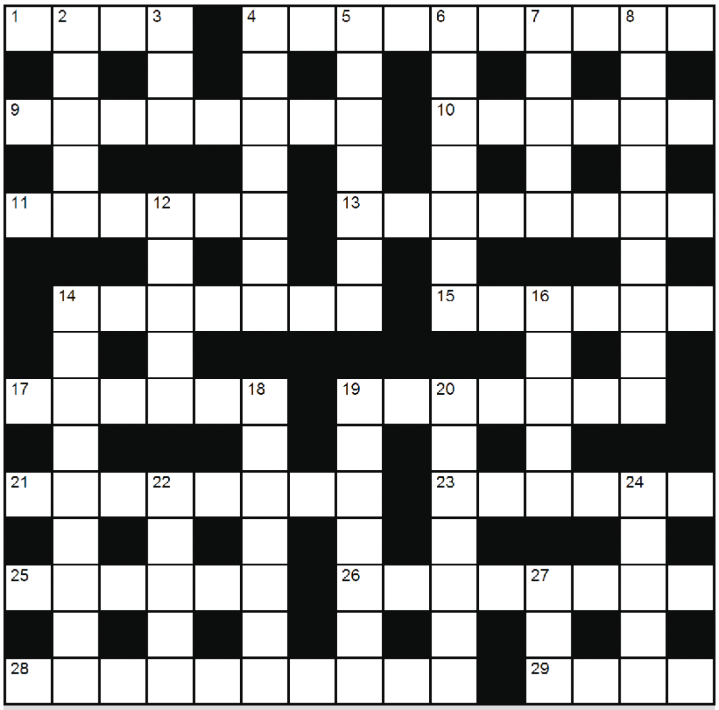

ACROSS
1 Standard iris? (4)
4 Deride fruity colour of *Philadelphus* shrub (4,6)
9 Royal residence's large yellow narcissus (8)
10 Get together and harvest (6)
11 Liquid capacity of abnormal tree growth – no reversing (6)
13 Applying fertiliser – ruminating about dropping it! (8)
14 Plant support frames old Native Americans would feel at home with? (7)
15 Some litchi contains a forced chicory head (6)
17/3 Small, highly prized, lettuce like a miniature cos (6,3)
19 Plantsman initially changed dollar to reduce tree growth (7)
21 Dwarf lavender cultivar this lad didn't mature! (5,3)
23 Alternatively, young goat said to be eg 'lady's slipper' (6)
25 Cherish… designer of Botanic Garden of Wales Great Glasshouse (6)
26 The winter aconite's anther is deformed (8)
28 Thoroughly decomposed (4-6)
29 Fruits of eg lupin – initially pinch out dried seeds (4)

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2 Tropical climbing plant confined by bromelia, naturally (5)
3 See 17 across
4 The 'prayer plant' – wild amaranth, docked (7)
5 Sweet flag species – awfully casual around start of May (7)
6 A fertiliser, naturally, is this! (7)
7 Megastore stocks this F1 hybrid sweet pepper (5)
8 GQT panellist's sort of late spring cuttings from stem tips (9)
12 Easily portable greenhouse pane? (5)
14 Eg small floribunda, aptly named 'County of Yorkshire' (5,4)
16 Newton's first bright yellow daylily? (5)
18 Confused proteas for fibrous grass *Stipa tenacissima* (7)
19 Lupins entirely captivating Cecil, 20th-century English landscape architect (7)
20 Name of a heavily spotted, red *Pulmonaria* – beastly thing! (7)
22 Sing the praises of… some *Ilex* to landscapist (5)
24 Overgrown with *Hedera*, I competed (5)
27 The best bit of tomato plant (3)

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DOWN 2 Coriander **3** Rowan **4** Linaria **5** Mycelia **6** Halesia **7** Tar **8** Reaps **13** Beets **15** Split **17** Stewartia **19** Florida **20** Chitted **21** Juniper **23** Prong **25/22** Black spot **27** Air.

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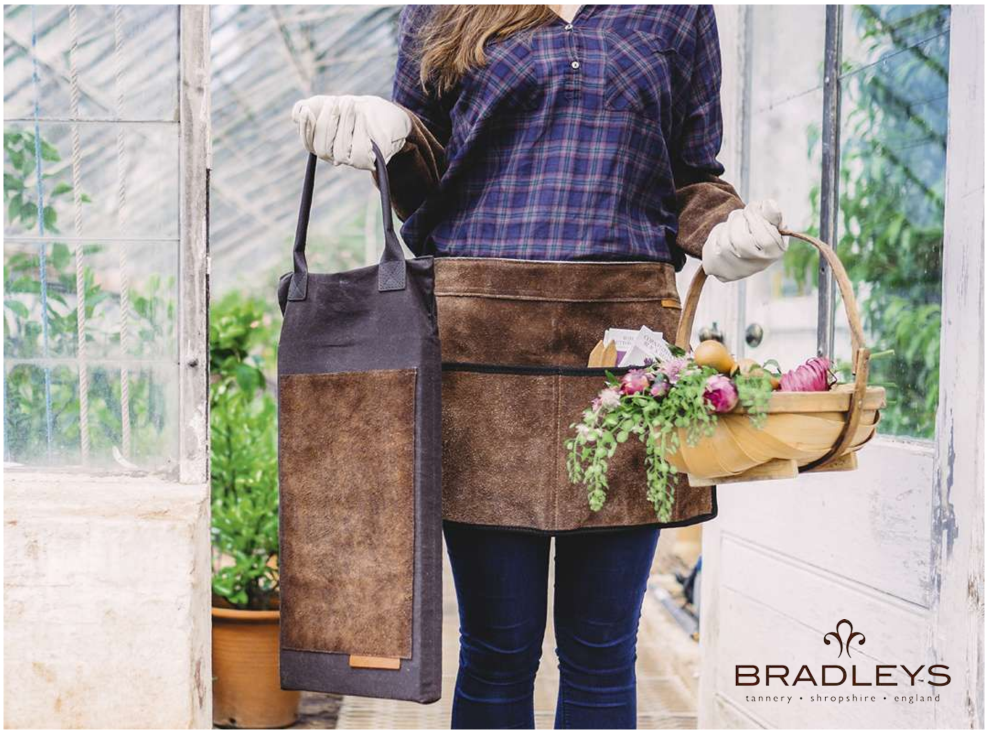

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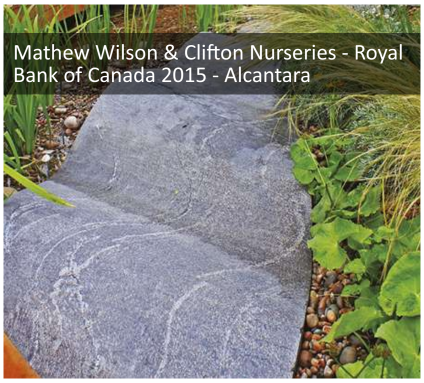
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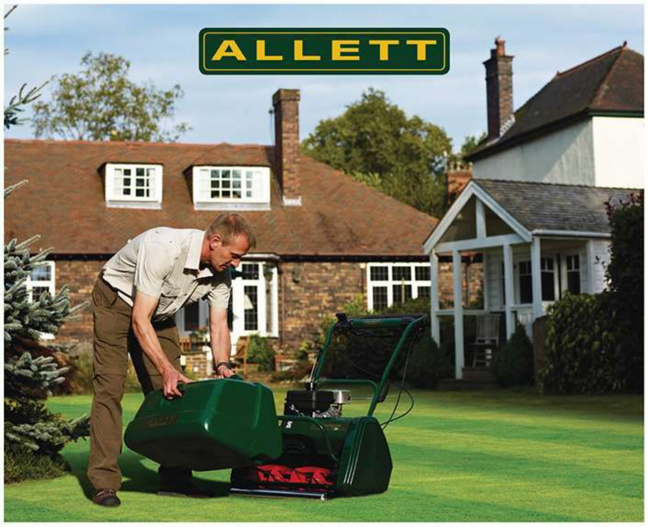

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- SAVE £10 – WILL YOUNG with special guest BILLY OCEAN for just £35, on 13 July 2016 Book online, by 6 June, at kewthemusic.seetickets.com/go/ktmwy and enter GARDENS10 when prompted.

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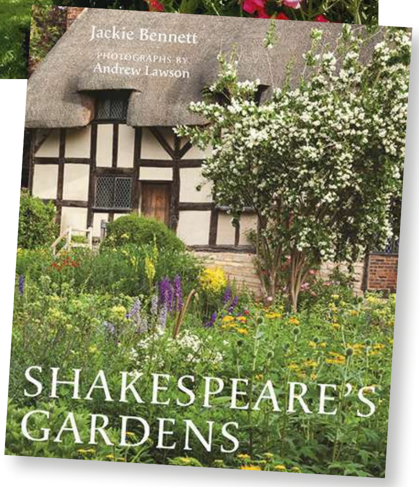

To mark this year's 400th anniversary of William Shakespeare's death, we are giving away three prizes that include a copy of Jackie Bennett's book *Shakespeare's Gardens*, along with a pair of passes to visit Shakespeare's historic homes and gardens.

Published in association with the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust, *Shakespeare's Gardens* is a chronological journey through the gardens in Stratford-upon-Avon owned by members of Shakespeare's family, along with those he could have known and visited in London, Warwickshire and beyond. Photography by Andrew Lawson is set alongside historic images of flowers, herbals and 16th-century illustrations to give a complete picture of Shakespeare's knowledge of plants and gardens.

Along with the book, three winners will receive a pair of annual passes from the Shakespeare Birthplace Trust for entry to Shakespeare's family homes, to include his birthplace, Anne Hathaway's Cottage and Gardens, Mary Arden's Farm, Hall's Croft, and (from its opening in July) the spectacular new garden and heritage landmark at New Place, the only home Shakespeare ever bought. **shakespeare.org.uk**

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PLEASE ANSWER THE FOLLOWING QUESTION
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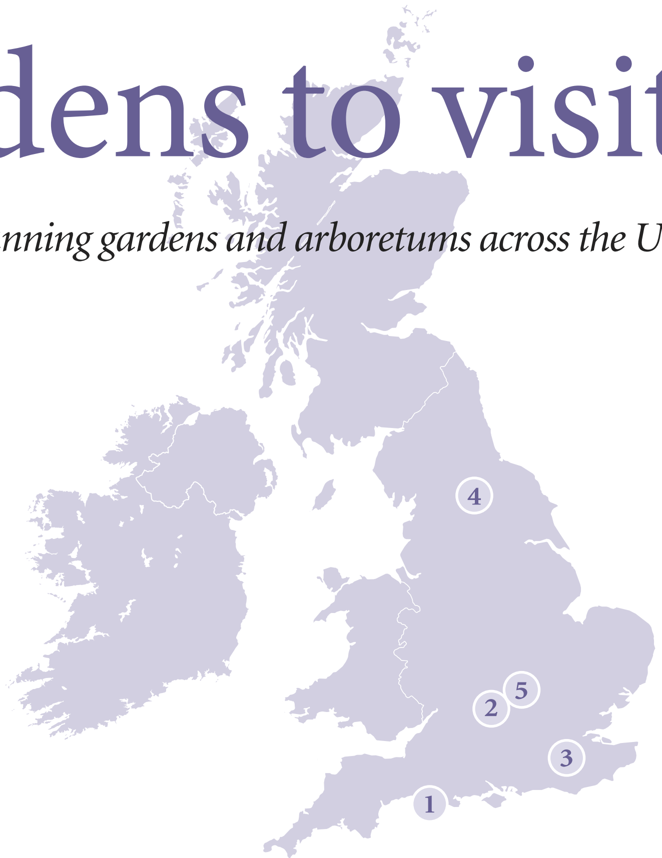
Summer gardens to visit

This summer, make time to visit this collection of stunning gardens and arboretums across the UK



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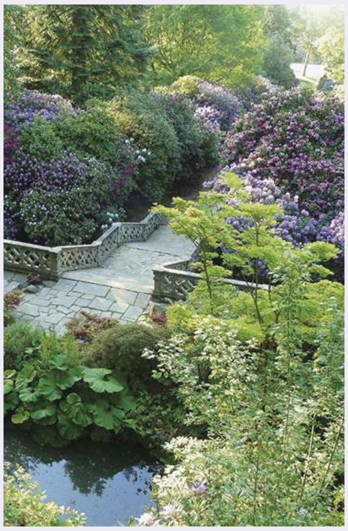

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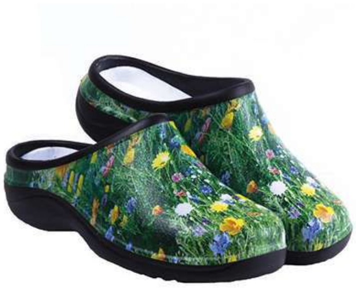

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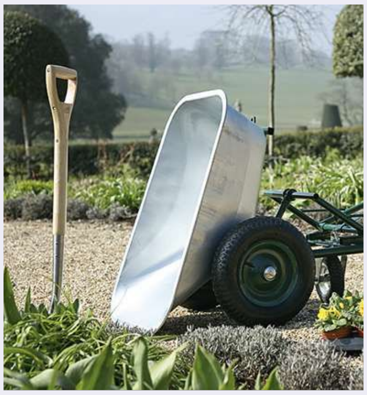

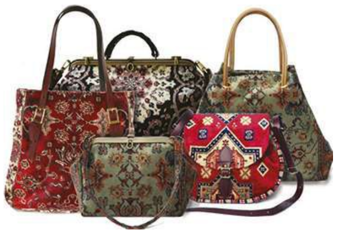

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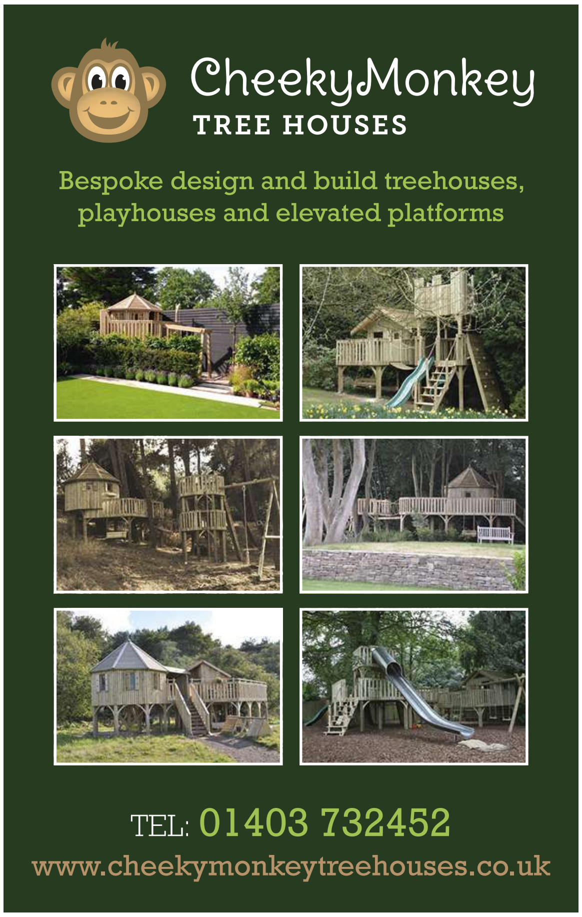
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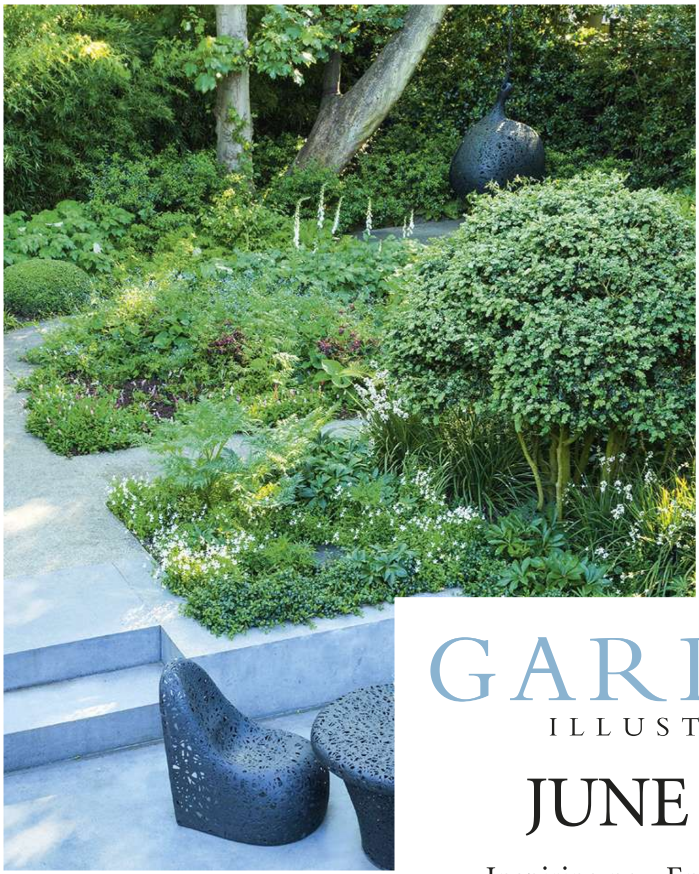

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- The best wisteria and how to grow it
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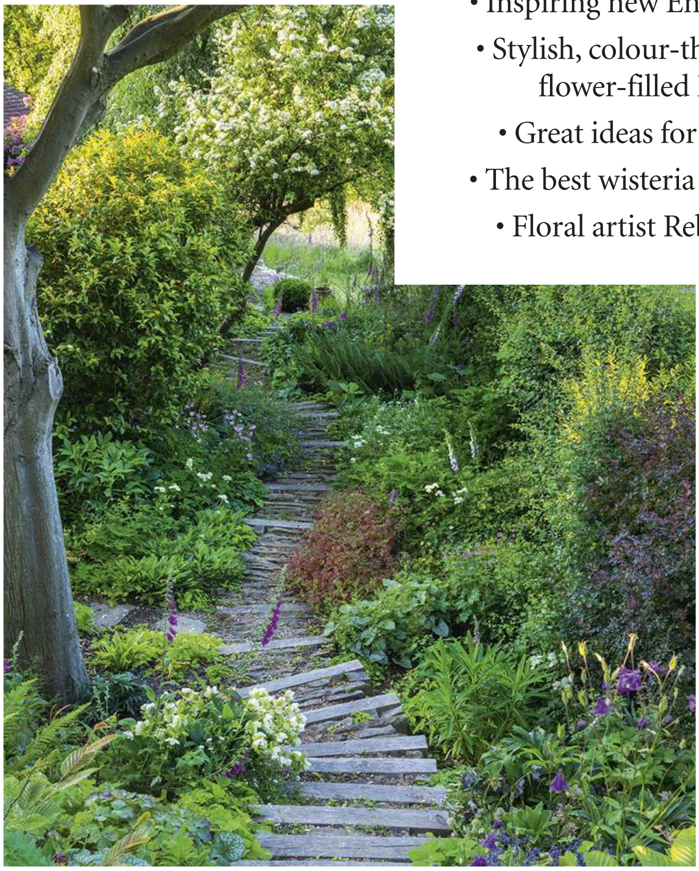

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Some like it hot

Two heat-loving poppies fill Frank's longing for flower and colour in May

WORDS **FRANK RONAN** ILLUSTRATION **CELIA HART**

May in California, in some respects, is the end of the gardening year. By the first of June we are obliged to have strimmed all the ground cover away, the assumption being that soon after the grasses and the herbaceous stuff will be desiccated enough to become a fire hazard. No roses to look forward to in June: *Rosa banksiae* 'Lutea', the rose most happily grown here, was at its best by the end of February, and *R.* x *odorata* 'Mutabilis' followed closely. There will be plasticky hybrid roses in plasticky irrigated gardens, but nothing you would want for yourself.

Two things strike you as the glories of this swansong, and they are both poppies

Looking around now, two things strike you as the glories of this swansong, and they are both poppies. The first, *Eschscholzia californica*, we know at home as an annual that will occasionally reseed itself in a gritty pot or the cracks of the terrace. The petals have an extraordinary texture, of such waxy sheen that they seem semi-liquid. Here, where it is native, you almost never see it in gardens, but you sometimes encounter breathtaking drifts along the side of a road. The Santa Barbara Botanic Garden has a meadow (not much grass in evidence, so possibly one of those meadows that are resown annually) in which it is the chief ingredient in May.

We did, eventually, find some *Eschscholzia* seed to buy, but of the expensive, cranky sort from a farmers market, in hand-printed packets on which the word Organic featured in a larger font than the name of the plant. This year the project will be to remember where one of the roadside swathes was and return at seed time for a healthy bagful big enough to broadcast in every likely spot. It is exactly the sort of weed that this garden needs.

The other poppy, *Romneya coulteri*, is so local that it shares a common name, the Matilija poppy, with the Matilija Canyon, which I can see from my desk. I'm not sure how that name came about (there is an unlikely story about a tribal chief's daughter), since it has a range all the way down into Mexico, but I have an unfounded fancy that the forms in the Matilija Canyon are particularly fine. They may be the closely related *R. coulteri* var. *trichocalyx*, and now that I know how to tell the difference I may find out this year. It is only, as the name implies, a matter of a hairy calyx.

Romneyas are giants among poppies, with flowers bigger than your hand towering higher than your head; white crinkled petals around a ridiculous boss of golden stamens. I never managed to grow it in Worcestershire, where the wet and the clay are everything it despises, but briefly had a good clump in Somerset once (my tenure was brief, rather than the clump), and have longed to establish it since. It is one of those plants that careful gardeners are nervous of since, once it is there, it will wander at will. I would let it wander anywhere it wanted if I could have it.

And there is no reason I can't have it now. If it likes the other side of the valley so much, why should it not like to come over here? Yet I haven't seen it on our flank, except in one or two gardens. We have the sort of soil it is supposed to like: free draining if there was ever anything to drain from it. True, it is a little shadier on this side, but the shade here is still brighter than full sun in Somerset.

Again I want it in quantity, but am told that it is tricky from seed because, like a lot of poppies, it resents the disturbance of transplantation. Perhaps I could get it going in modules, which works with ladybird poppies at home. The recommended method, perversely, is given as root cuttings. Roots that resent depotting but don't mind being sliced. Odd how some plants will wither at a gentle teasing but thrive after a brutal massacre. □

Frank Ronan is a novelist who gardens in both the UK and USA.

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